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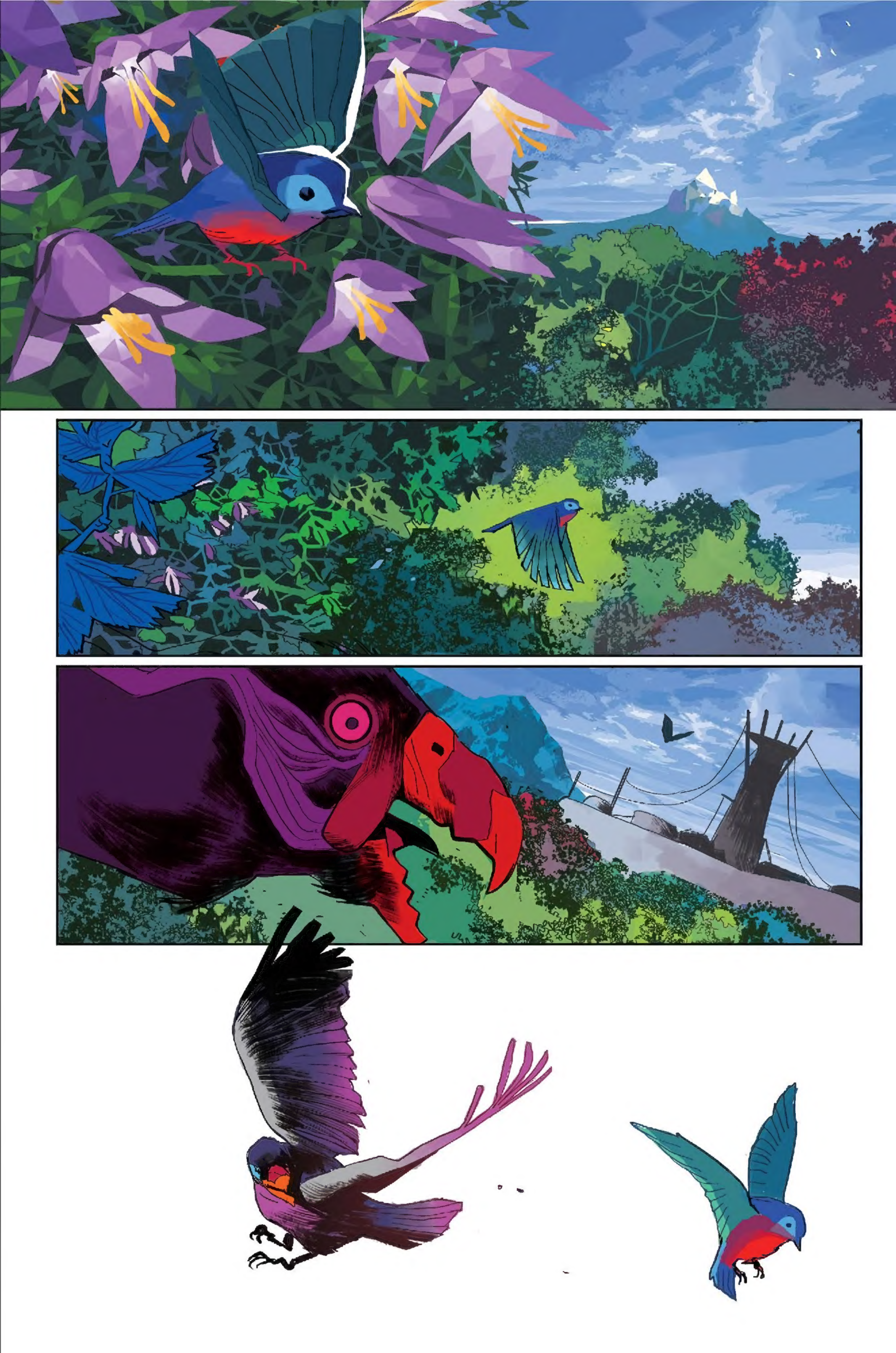
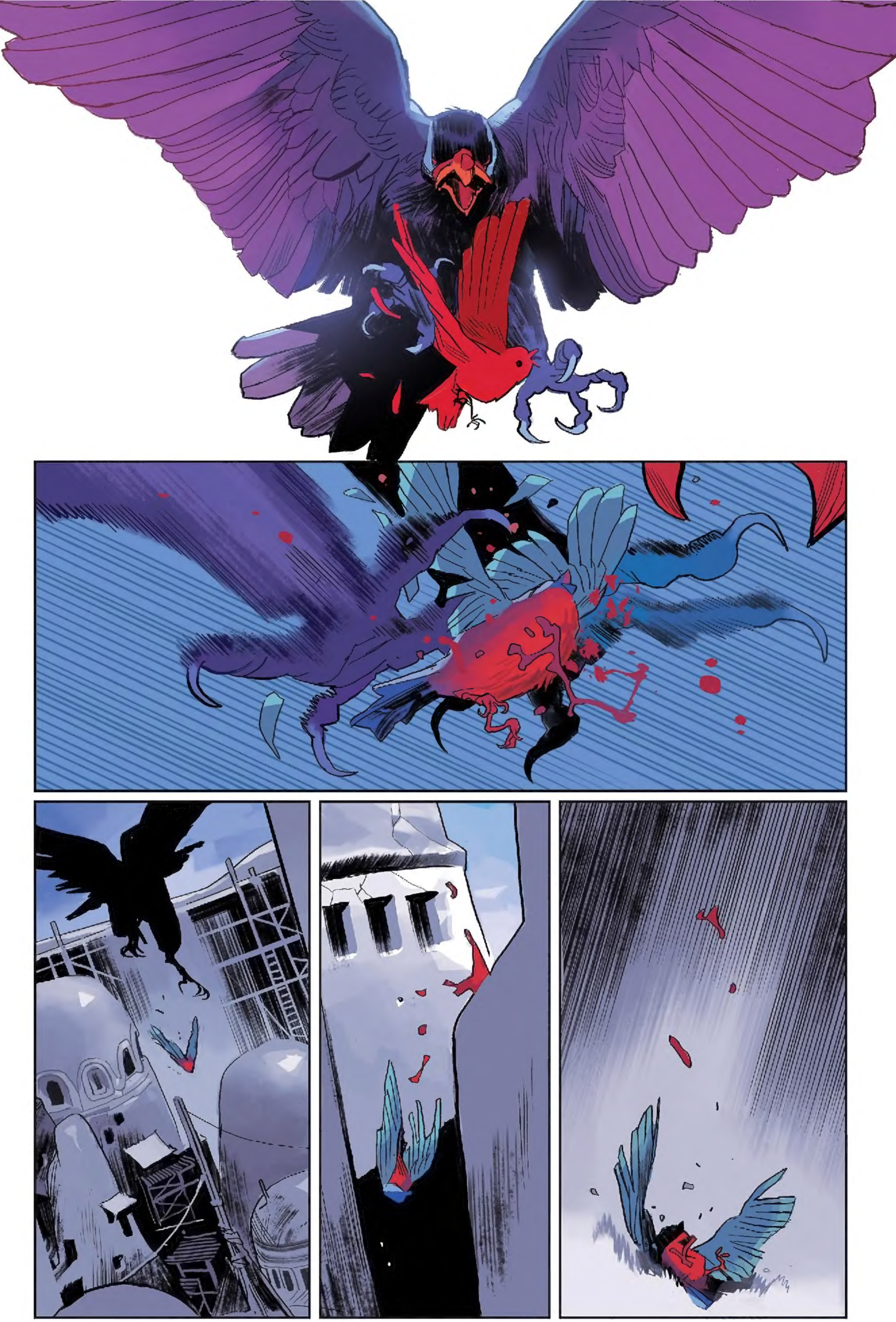
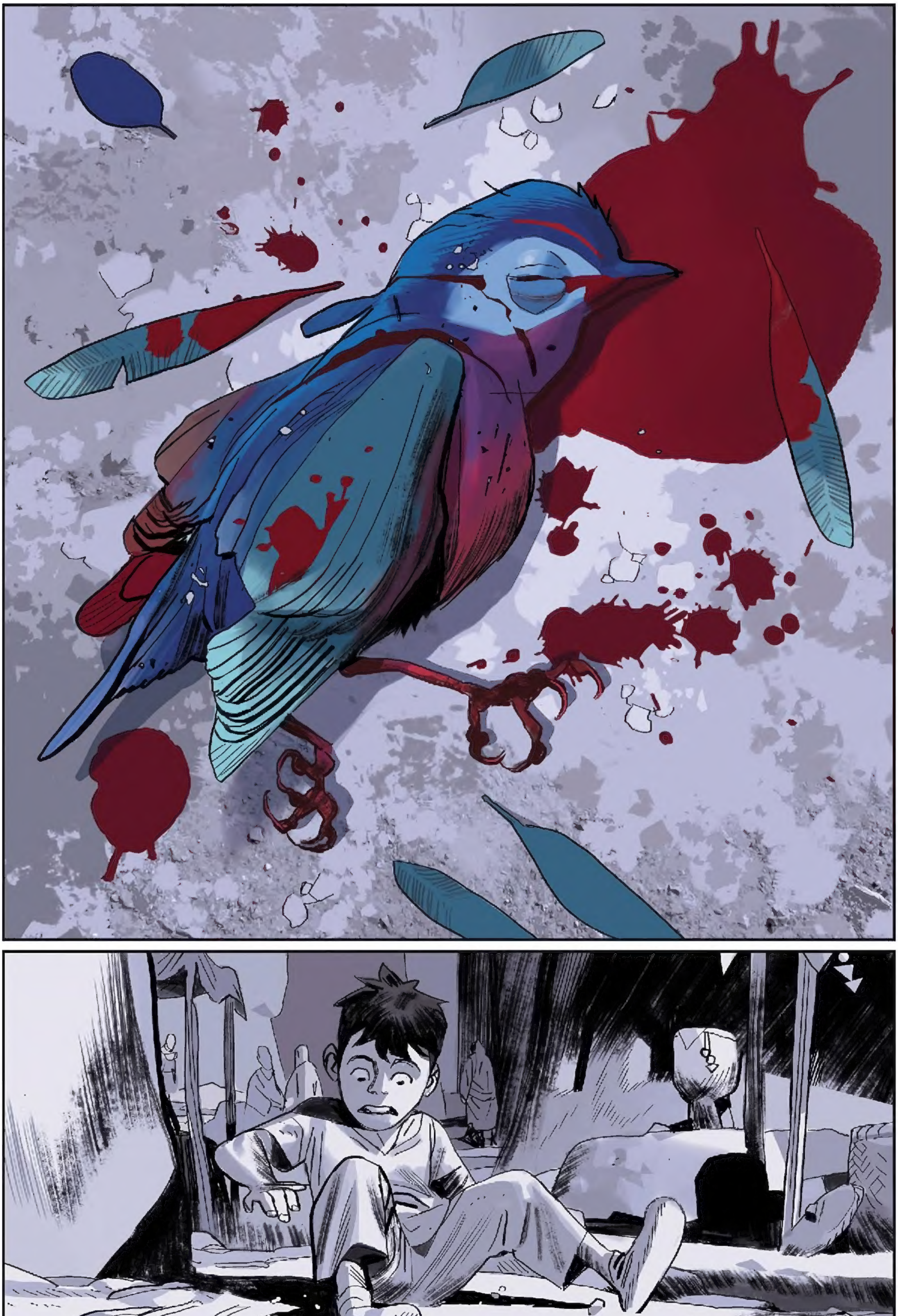
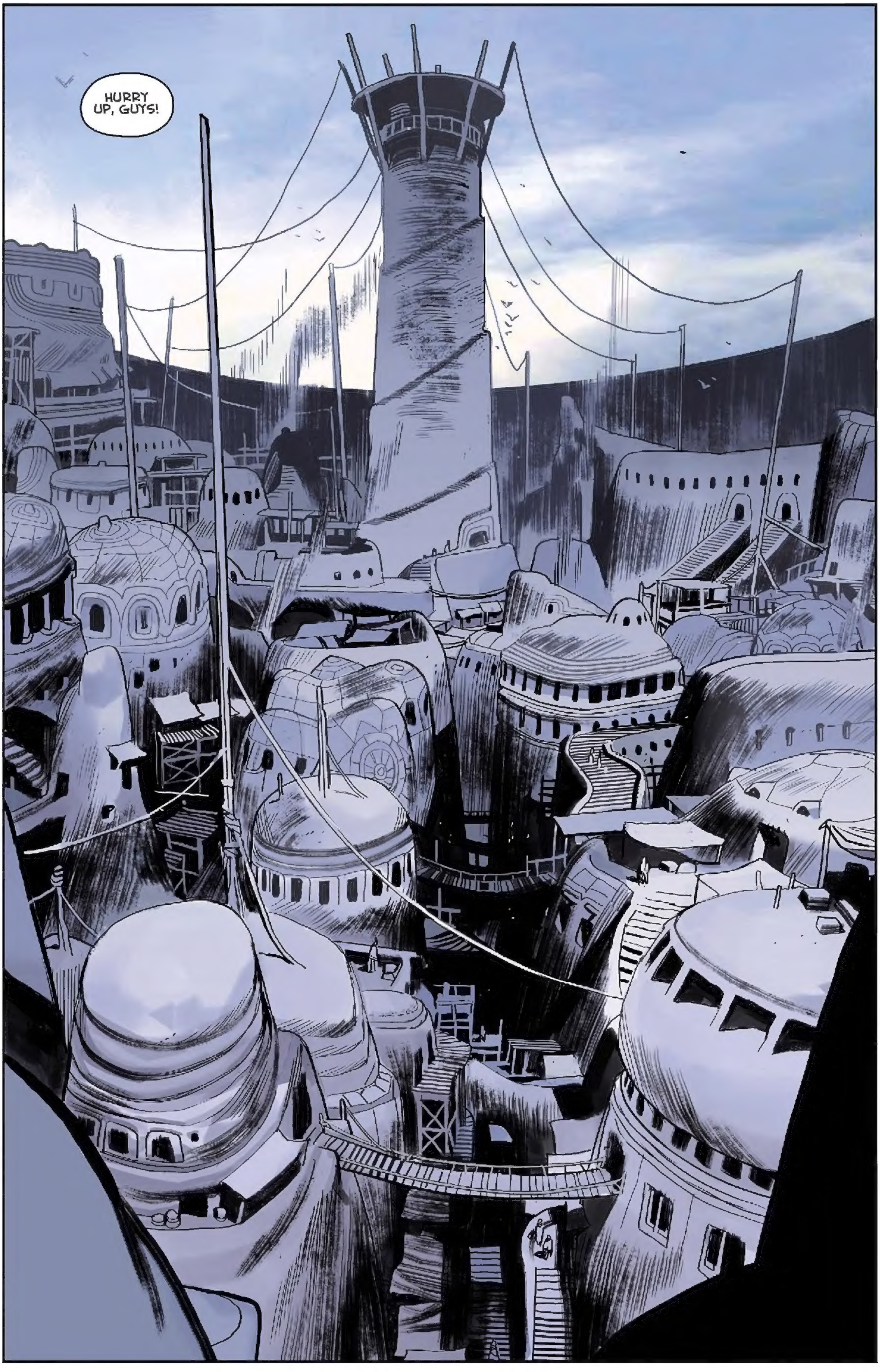
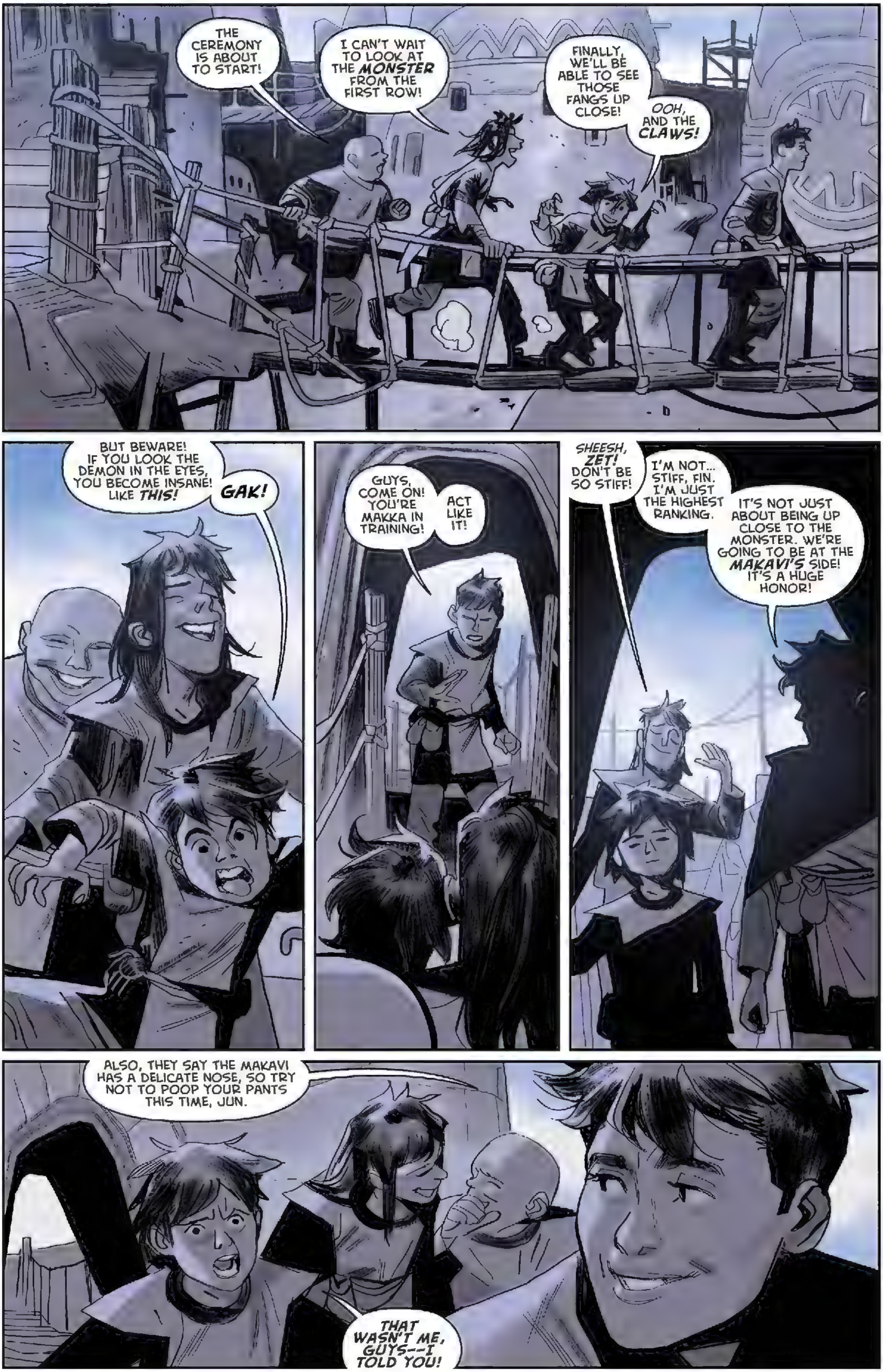
CHAPTER
ONE

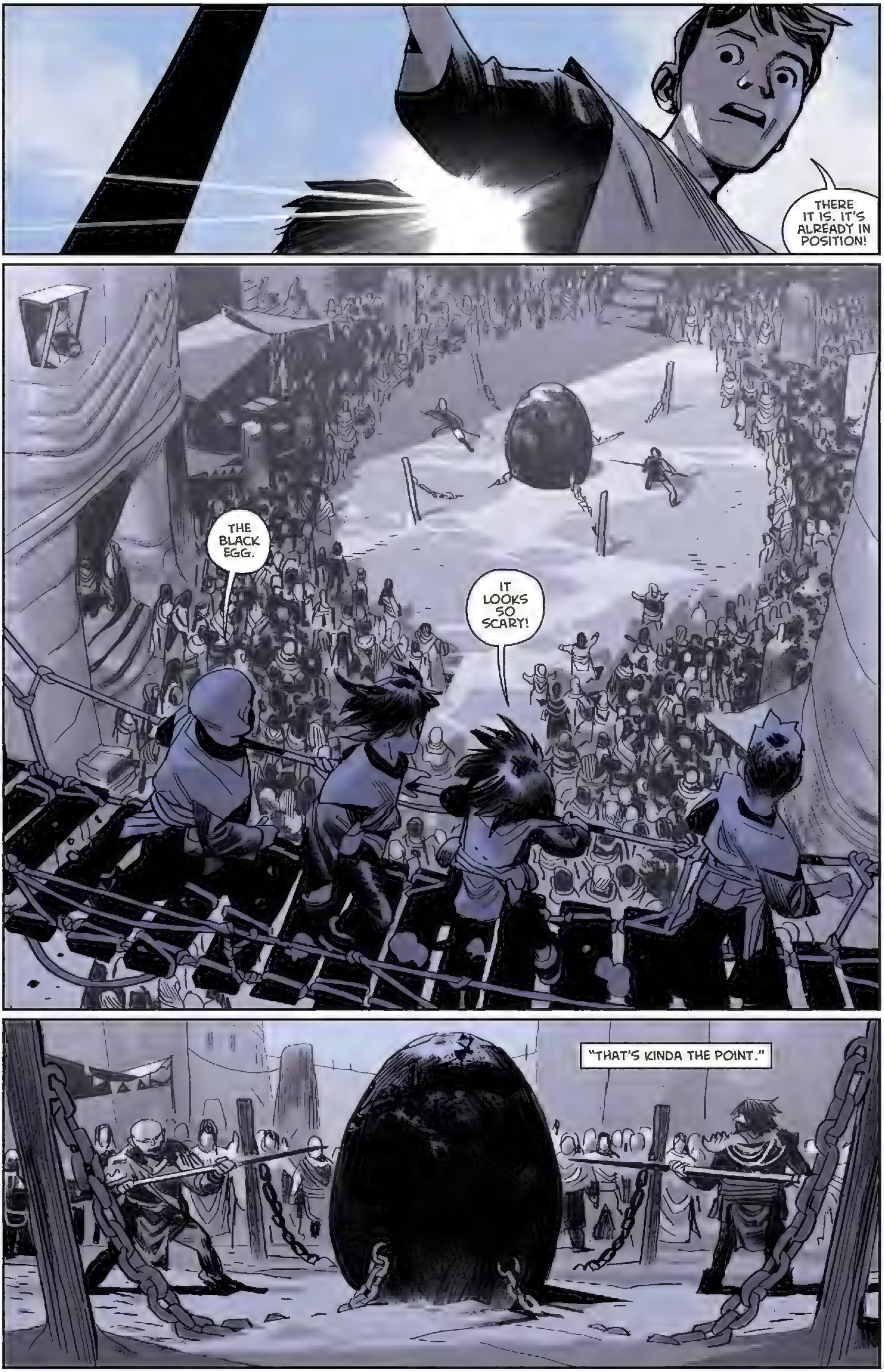


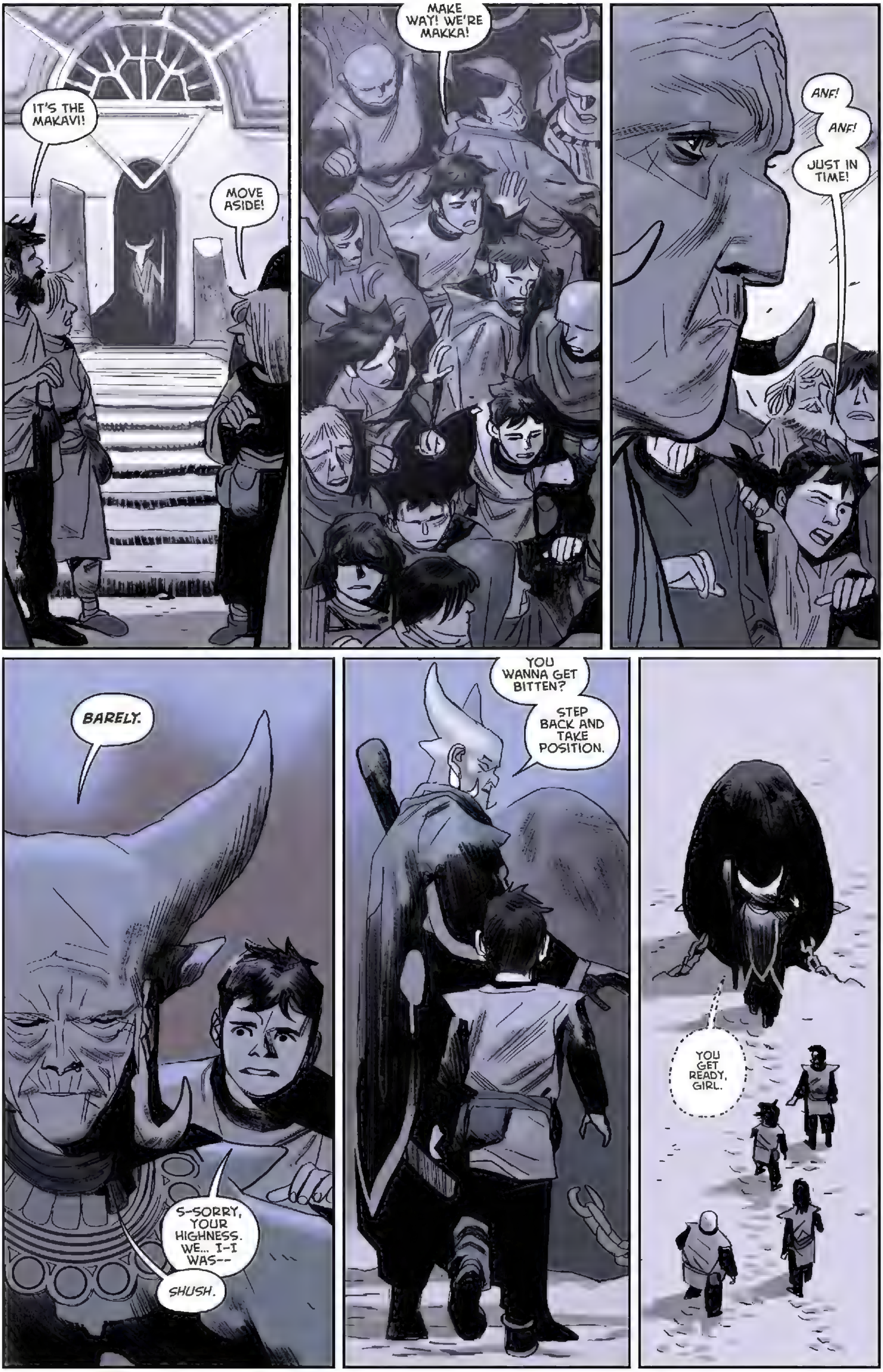


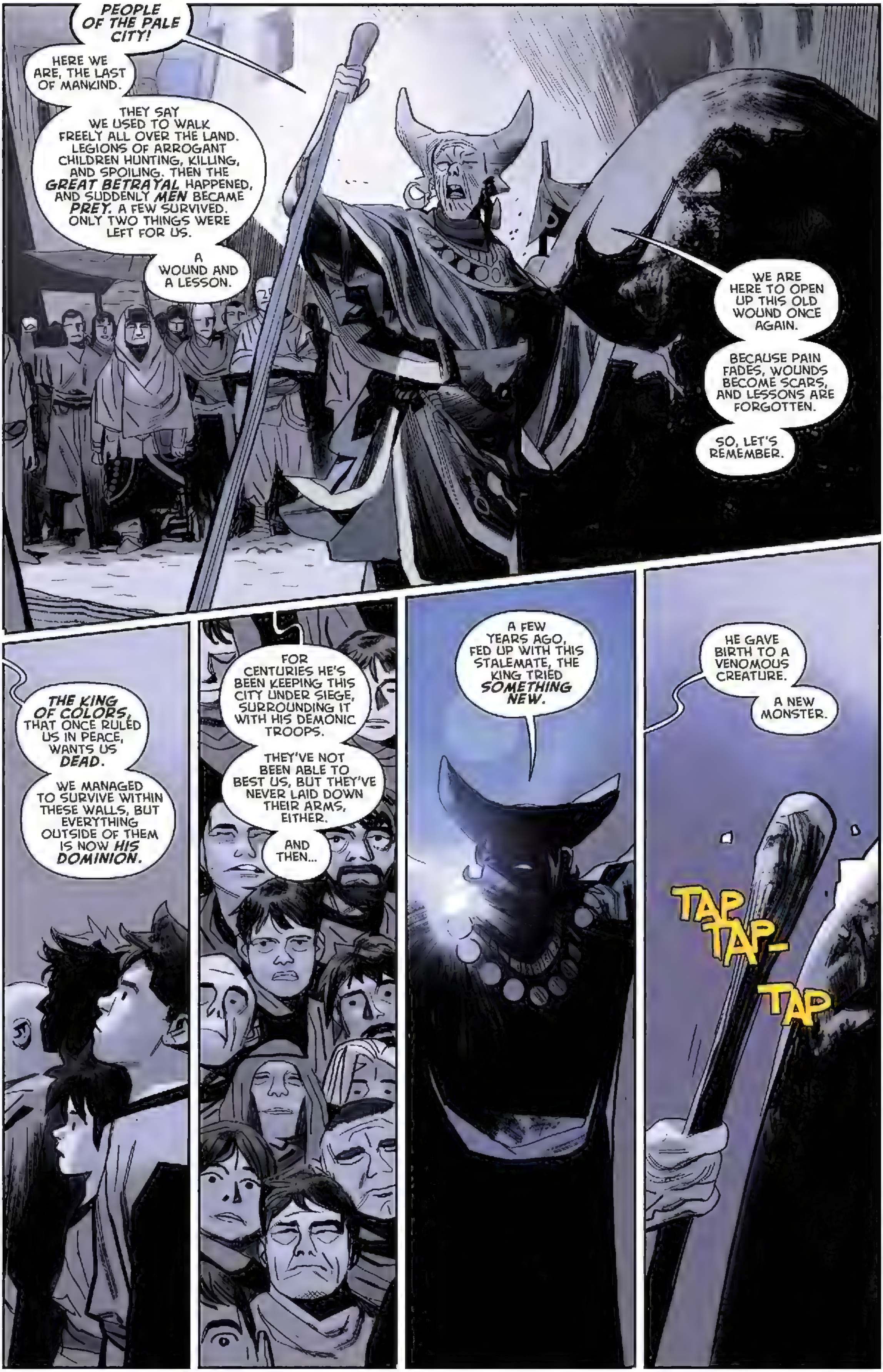


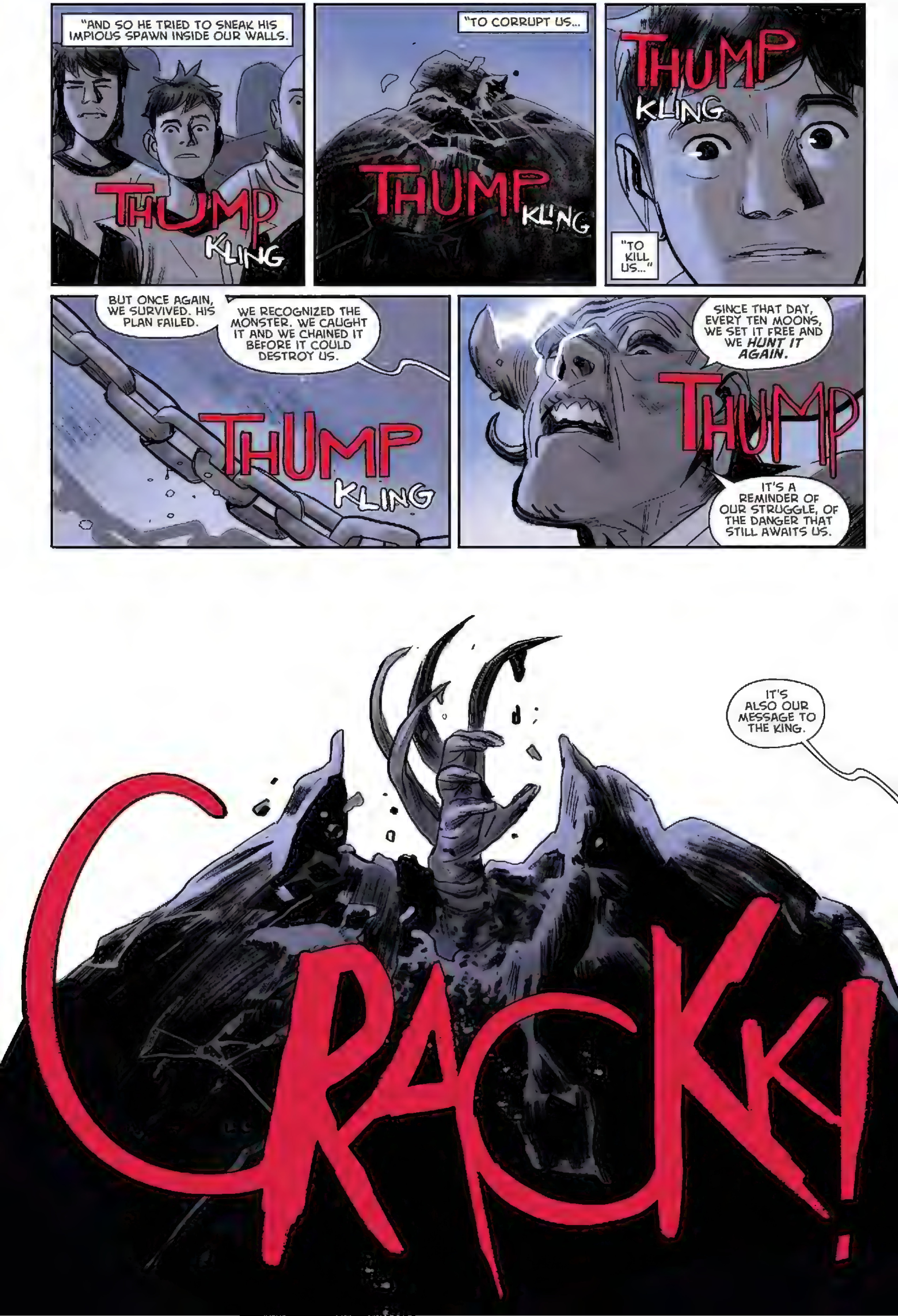

HURRY UP, GUYS!

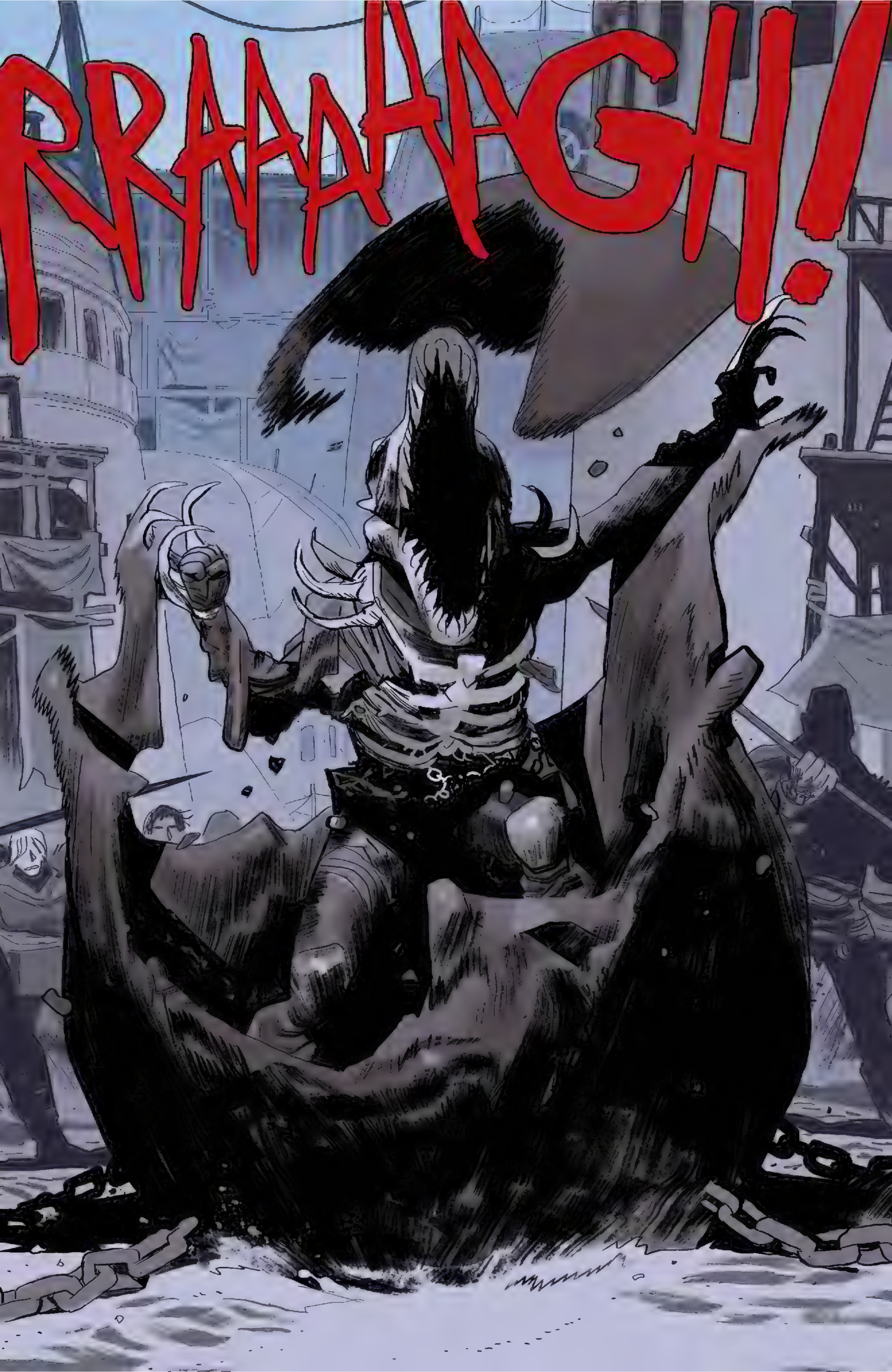

THE CEREMONY IS ABOUT TO START!
I CAN'T WAIT TO LOOK AT THE ***MONSTER*** FROM THE FIRST ROW!
FINALLY, WE'LL BE ABLE TO SEE THOSE FANGS UP CLOSE!
OOH, AND THE ***CLAWS!***
BUT BEWARE! IF YOU LOOK THE DEMON IN THE EYES, YOU BECOME INSANE! LIKE ***THIS!***
GAK!
GUYS, COME ON! YOU'RE MAKKA IN TRAINING!
ACT LIKE IT!
SHEESH, ***ZET!*** DON'T BE SO STIFF!
I'M NOT... STIFF, FIN. I'M JUST THE HIGHEST RANKING.
IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT BEING UP CLOSE TO THE MONSTER. WE'RE GOING TO BE AT THE ***MAKAVI'S*** SIDE! IT'S A HUGE HONOR!
ALSO, THEY SAY THE MAKAVI HAS A DELICATE NOSE, SO TRY NOT TO POOP YOUR PANTS THIS TIME, JUN.
THAT WASN'T ME, GUYS--I TOLD YOU!

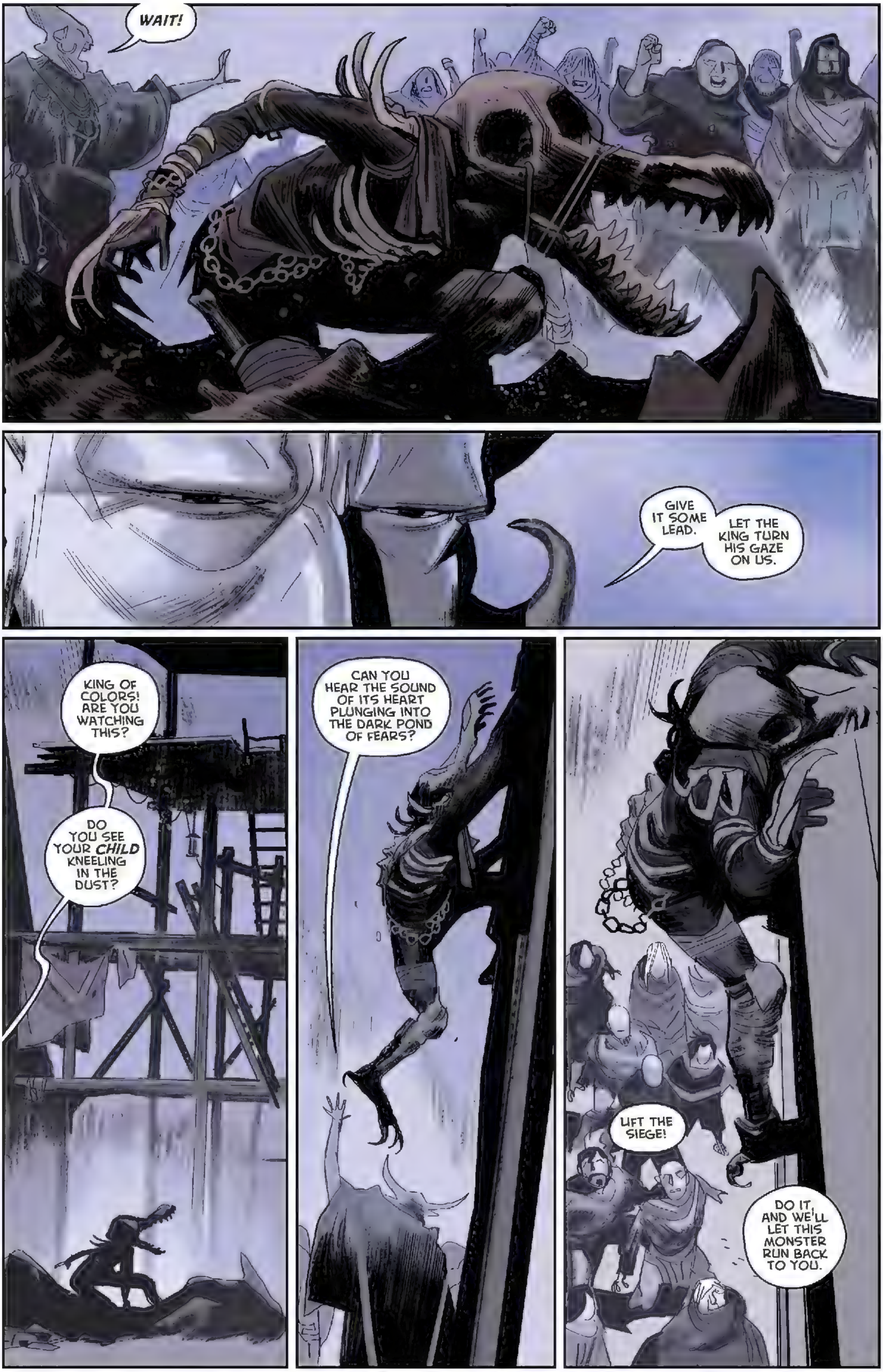

THERE IT IS. IT'S ALREADY IN POSITION!
THE BLACK EGG.
IT LOOKS SO SCARY!
"THAT'S KINDA THE POINT."

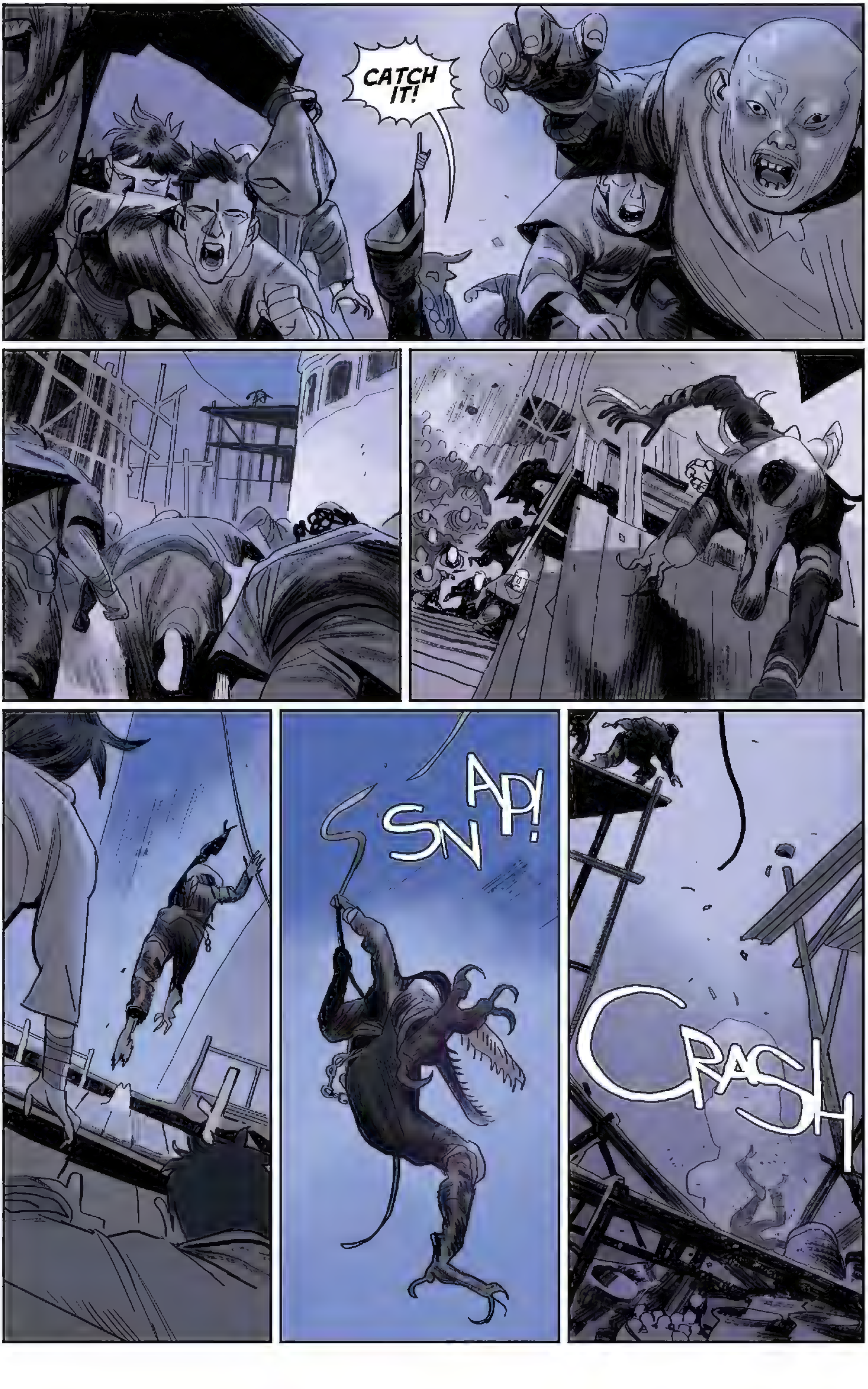

IT'S THE MAKAVI!
MOVE ASIDE!
MAKE WAY! WE'RE MAKKA!
ANF!
ANF!
JUST IN TIME!
BARELY.
S-SORRY, YOUR HIGHNESS. WE... I-I WAS--
SHUSH.
YOU WANNA GET BITTEN?
STEP BACK AND TAKE POSITION.
YOU GET READY, GIRL.

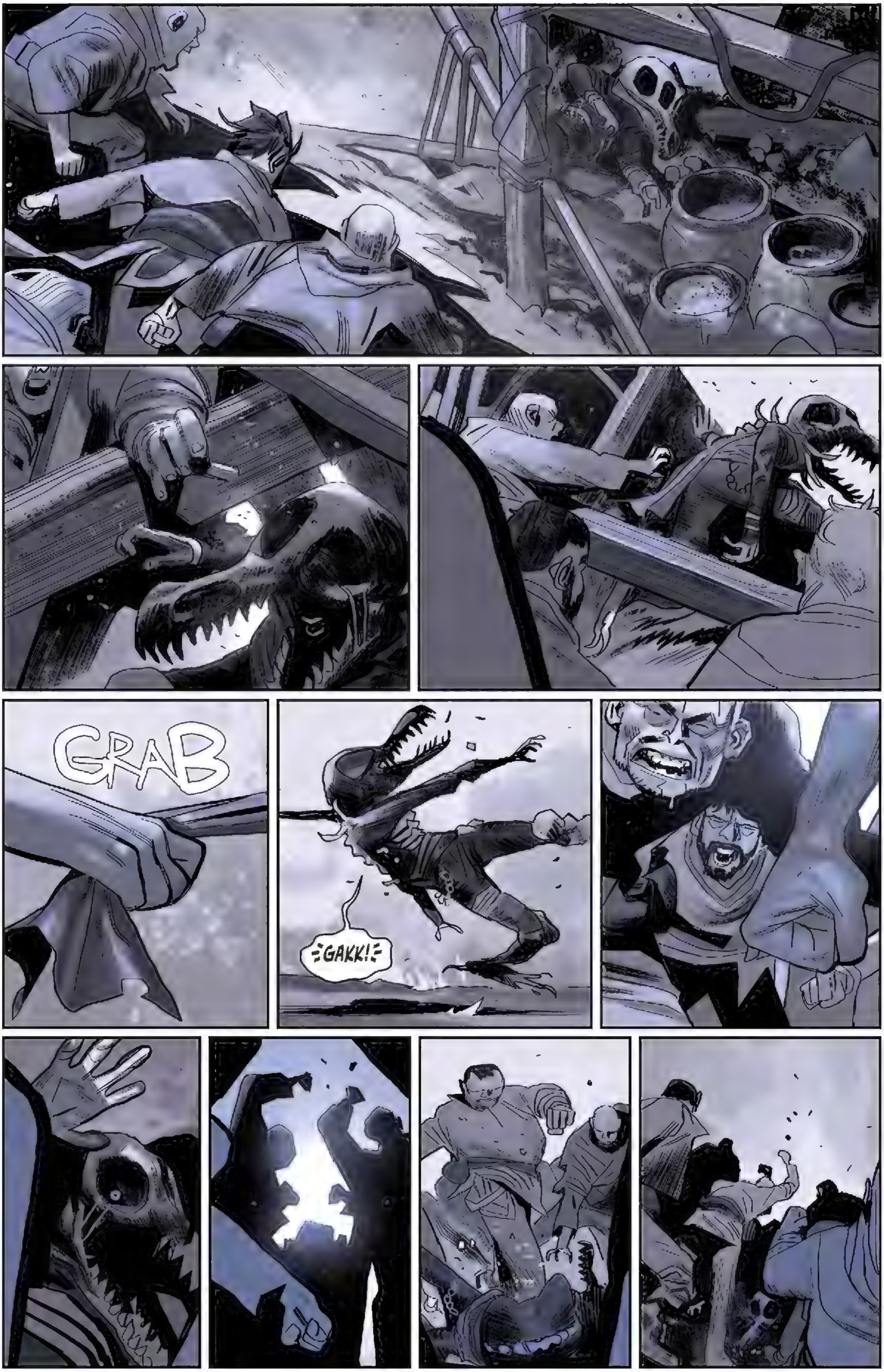

PEOPLE OF THE PALE CITY!
HERE WE ARE, THE LAST OF MANKIND.
THEY SAY WE USED TO WALK FREELY ALL OVER THE LAND. LEGIONS OF ARROGANT CHILDREN HUNTING, KILLING, AND SPOILING. THEN THE GREAT BETRAYAL HAPPENED, AND SUDDENLY MEN BECAME PREY. A FEW SURVIVED. ONLY TWO THINGS WERE LEFT FOR US.
A WOUND AND A LESSON.
WE ARE HERE TO OPEN UP THIS OLD WOUND ONCE AGAIN.
BECAUSE PAIN FADES, WOUNDS BECOME SCARS, AND LESSONS ARE FORGOTTEN.
SO, LET'S REMEMBER.
THE KING OF COLORS, THAT ONCE RULED US IN PEACE, WANTS US DEAD.
WE MANAGED TO SURVIVE WITHIN THESE WALLS, BUT EVERYTHING OUTSIDE OF THEM IS NOW HIS DOMINION.
FOR CENTURIES HE'S BEEN KEEPING THIS CITY UNDER SIEGE, SURROUNDING IT WITH HIS DEMONIC TROOPS.
THEY'VE NOT BEEN ABLE TO BEST US, BUT THEY'VE NEVER LAID DOWN THEIR ARMS, EITHER.
AND THEN...
A FEW YEARS AGO, FED UP WITH THIS STALEMATE, THE KING TRIED SOMETHING NEW.
HE GAVE BIRTH TO A VENOMOUS CREATURE.
A NEW MONSTER.
TAP TAP- TAP

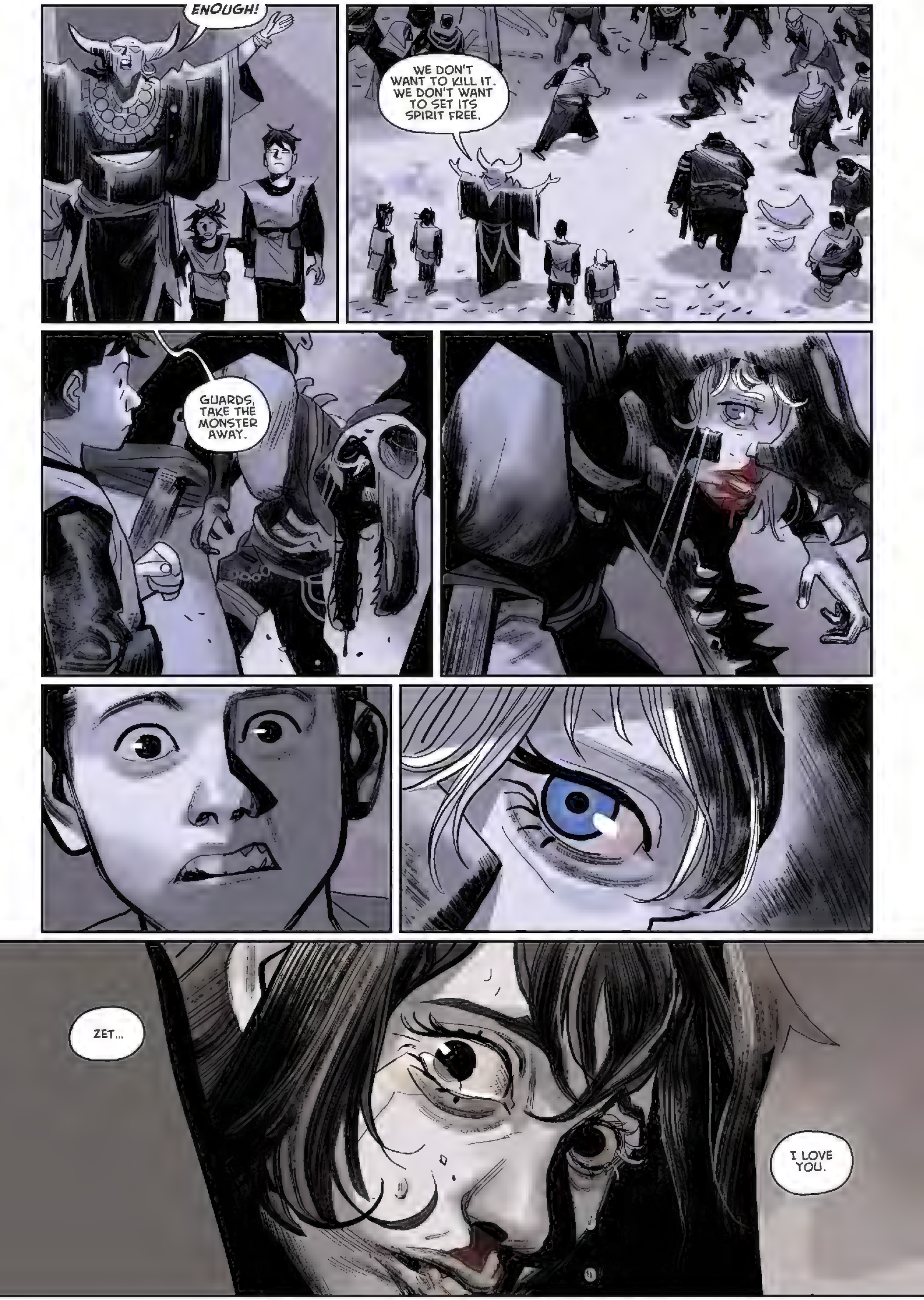

"AND SO HE TRIED TO SNEAK HIS IMPIOUS SPAWN INSIDE OUR WALLS.
THUMP
KLING
"TO CORRUPT US...
THUMP
KLING
THUMP
KLING
"TO KILL US..."
BUT ONCE AGAIN, WE SURVIVED. HIS PLAN FAILED.
WE RECOGNIZED THE MONSTER. WE CAUGHT IT AND WE CHAINED IT BEFORE IT COULD DESTROY US.
THUMP
KLING
SINCE THAT DAY, EVERY TEN MOONS, WE SET IT FREE AND WE *HUNT IT AGAIN*.
THUMP
IT'S A REMINDER OF OUR STRUGGLE, OF THE DANGER THAT STILL AWAITS US.
IT'S ALSO OUR MESSAGE TO THE KING.
CRACKK!

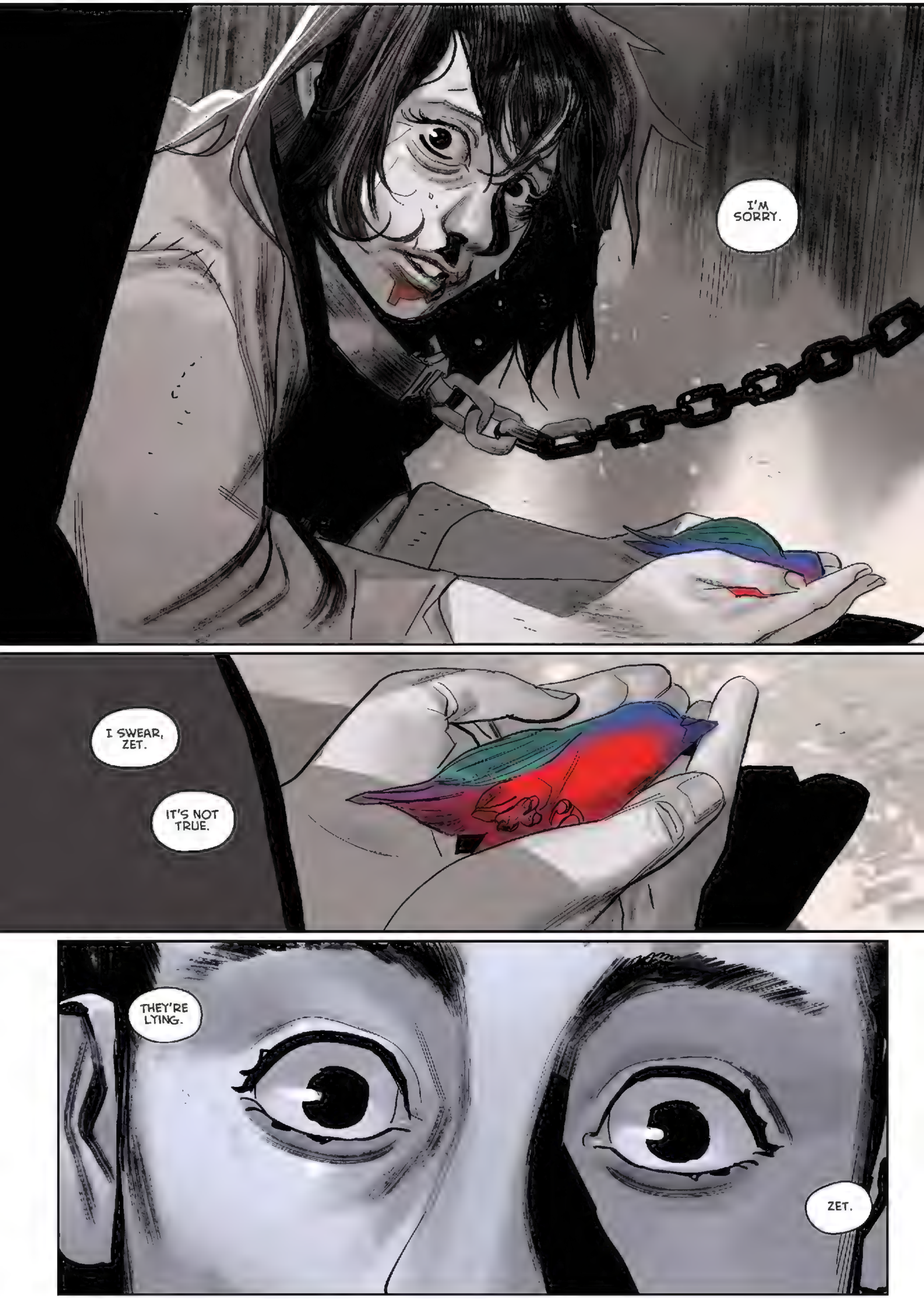

RRAAAAAGH!!

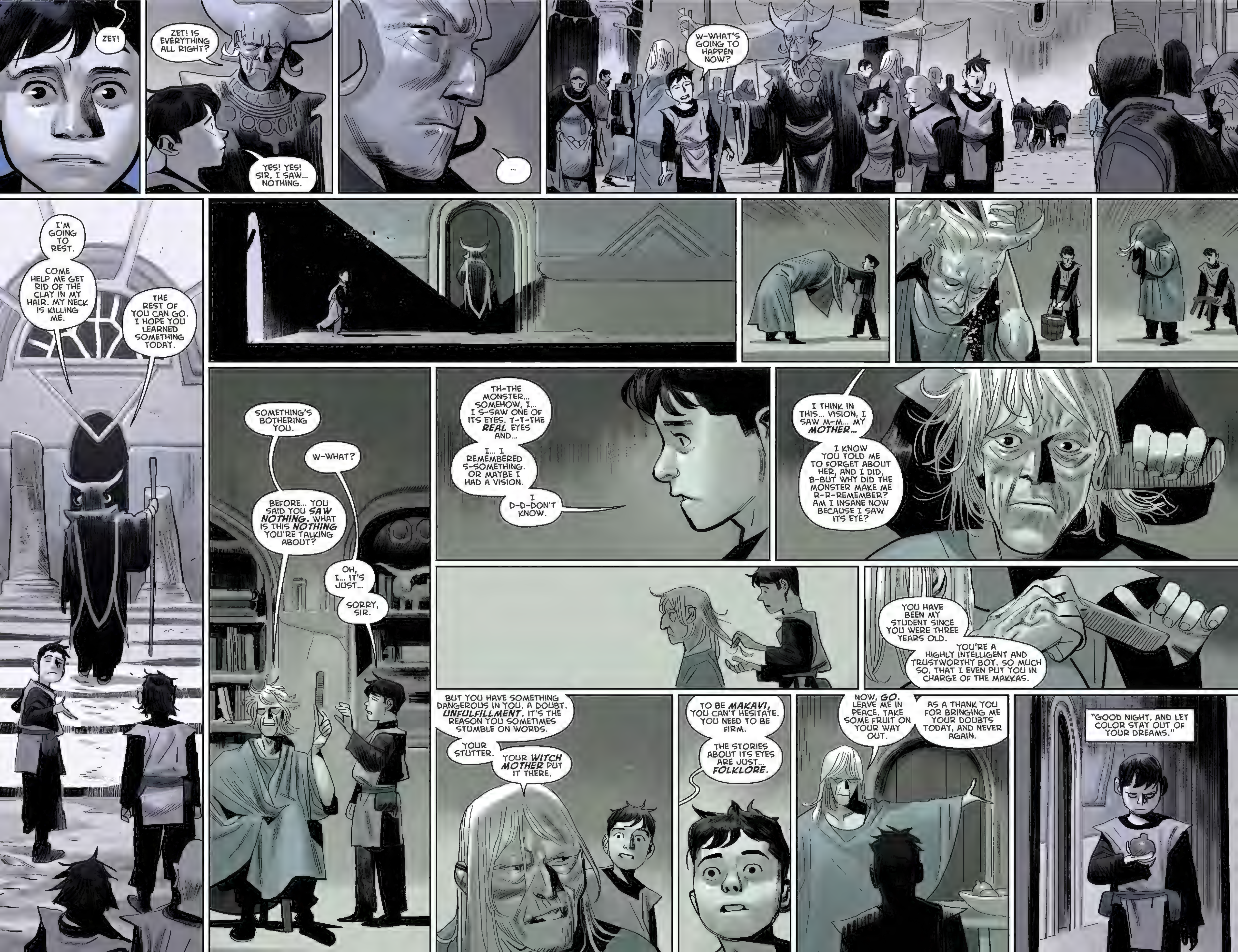

WAIT!
GIVE IT SOME LEAD.
LET THE KING TURN HIS GAZE ON US.
KING OF COLORS! ARE YOU WATCHING THIS?
DO YOU SEE YOUR *CHILD* KNEELING IN THE DUST?
CAN YOU HEAR THE SOUND OF ITS HEART PLUNGING INTO THE DARK POND OF FEARS?
LIFT THE SIEGE!
DO IT, AND WE'LL LET THIS MONSTER RUN BACK TO YOU.

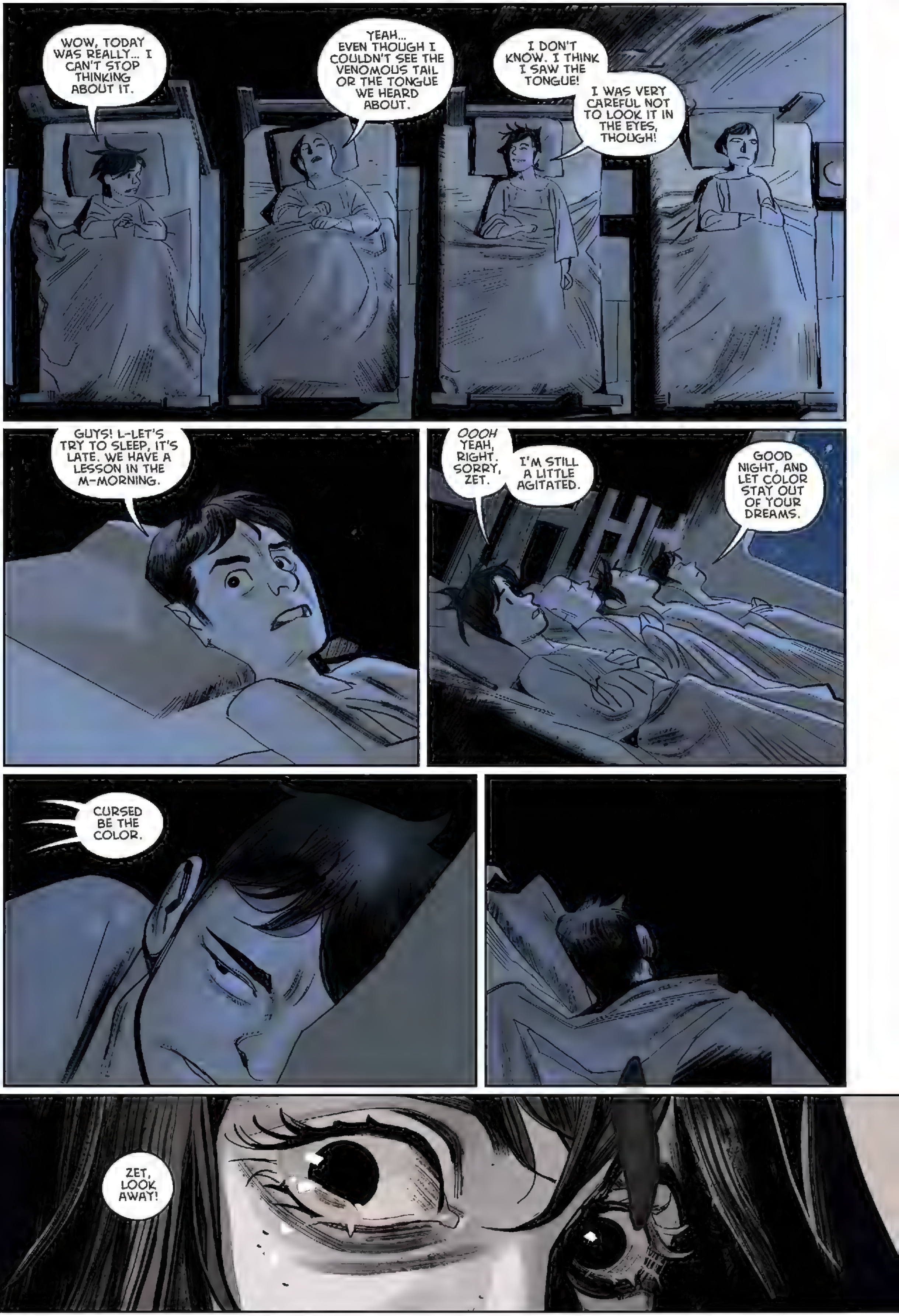

CATCH IT!
SNAP!
CRASH

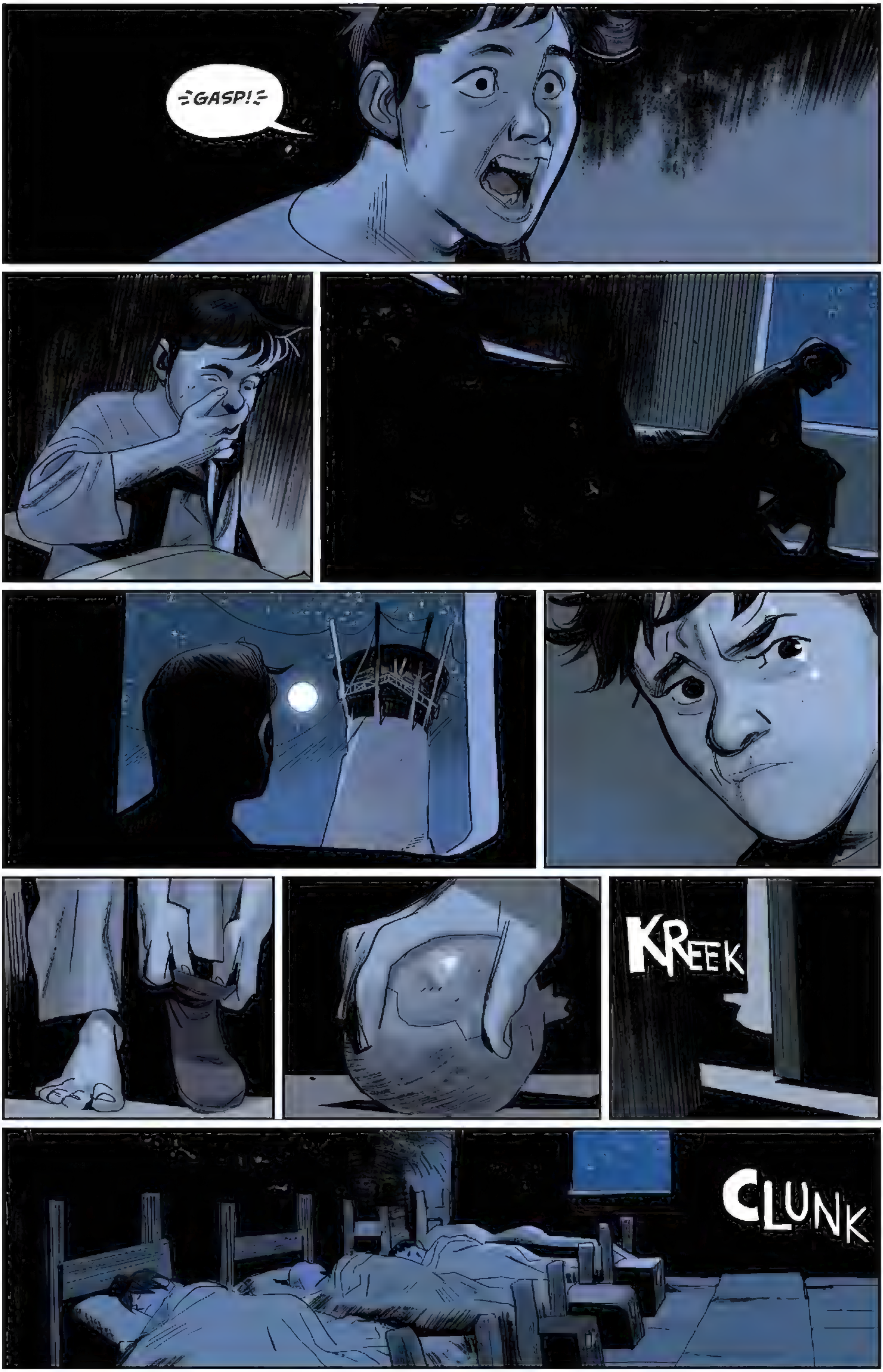

GRAB
GAKK!

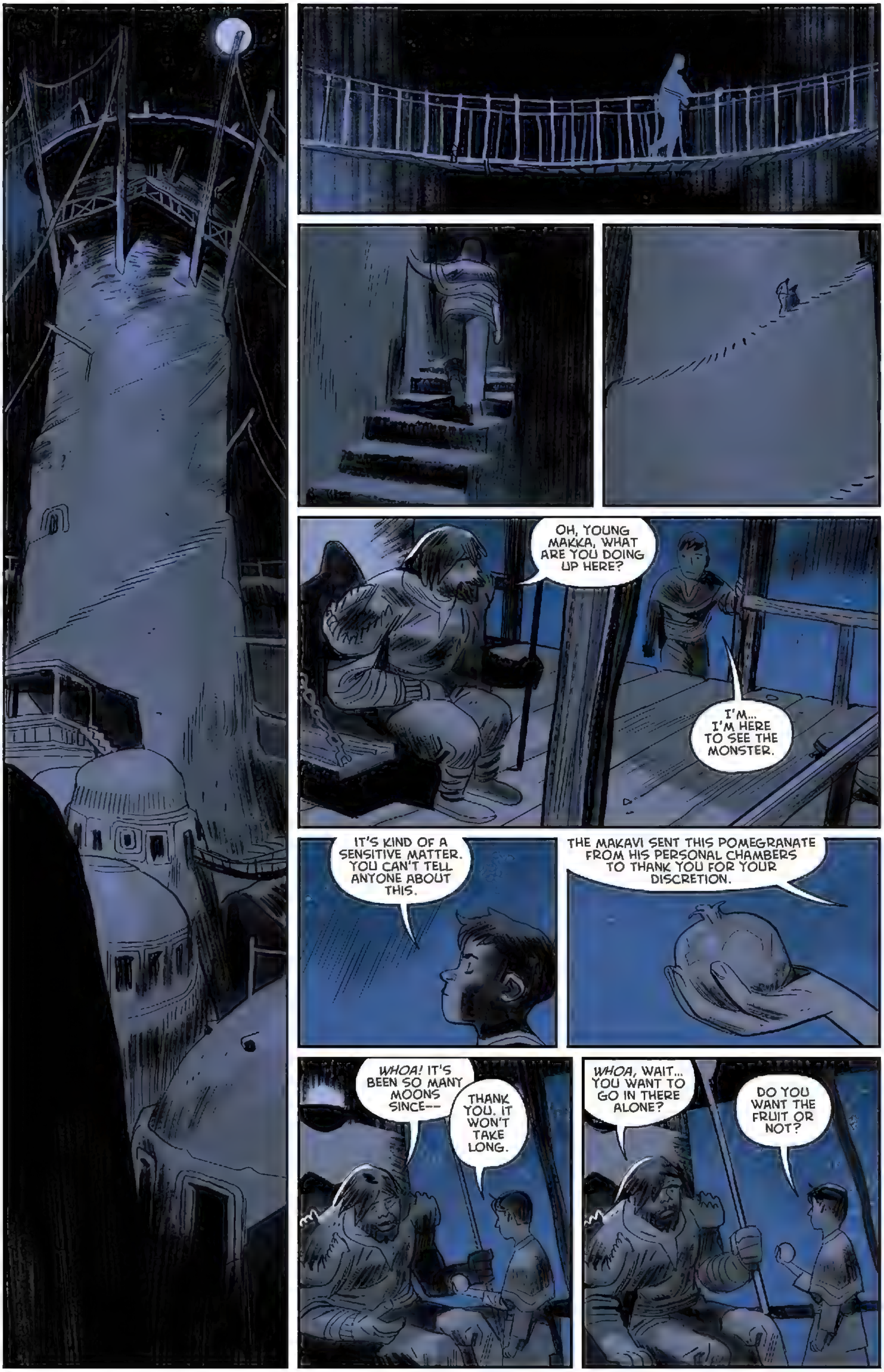

ENOUGH!
WE DON'T WANT TO KILL IT. WE DON'T WANT TO SET ITS SPIRIT FREE.
GUARDS, TAKE THE MONSTER AWAY.
ZET...
I LOVE YOU.

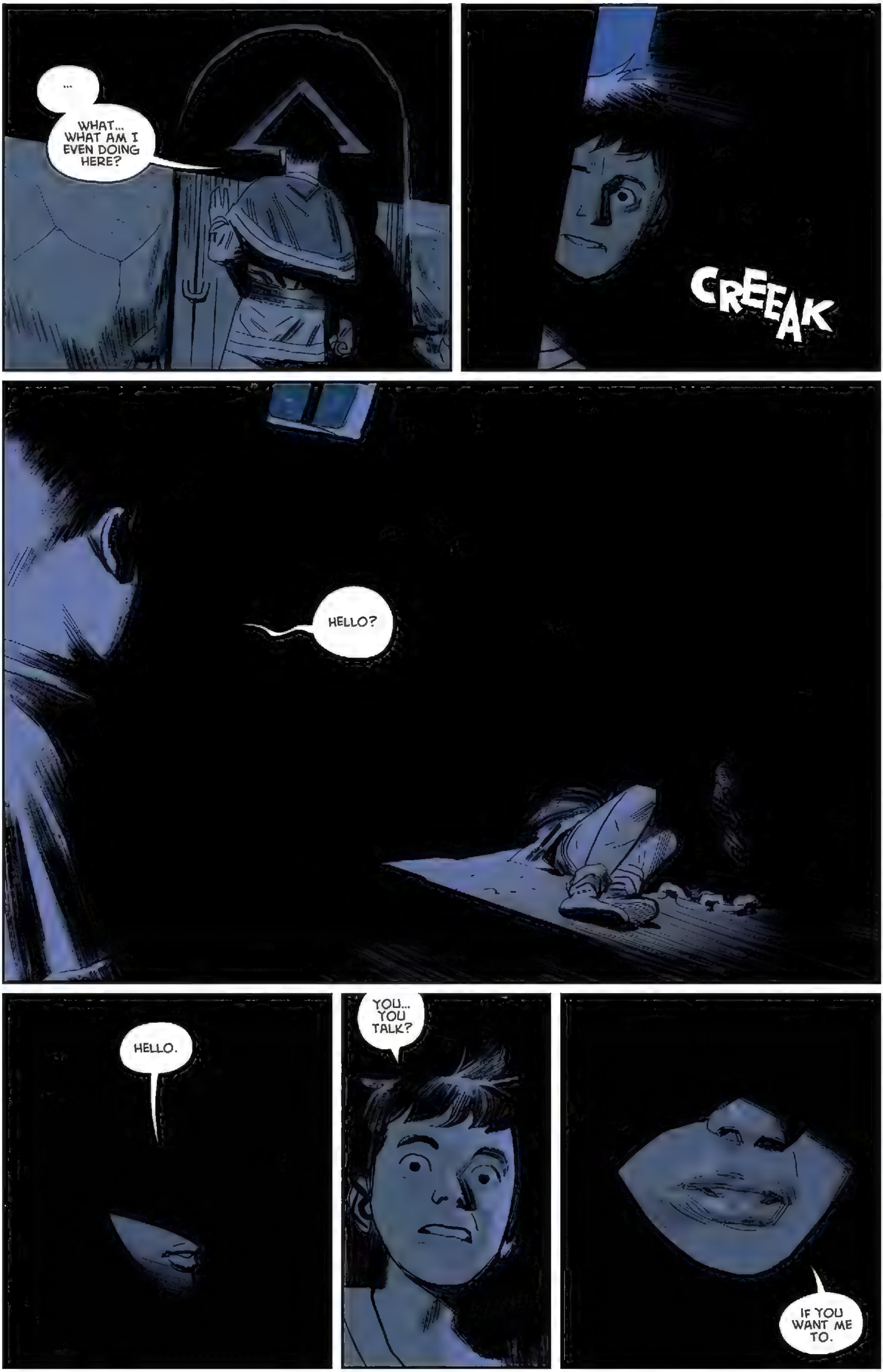

I'M SORRY.
I SWEAR, ZET.
IT'S NOT TRUE.
THEY'RE LYING.
ZET.

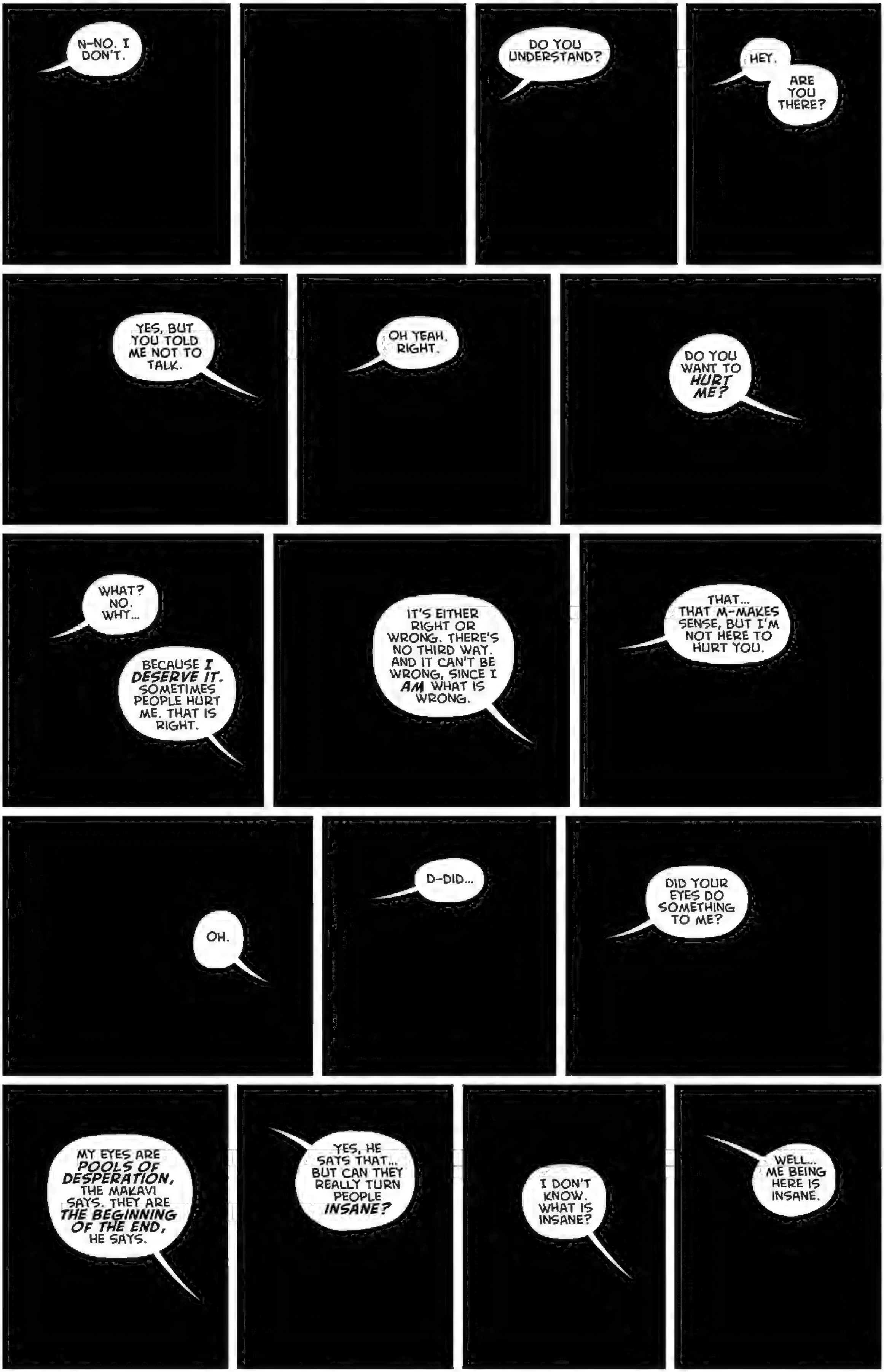

ZET!
ZET! IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?
YES! YES! SIR, I SAW... NOTHING.
...
W-WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NOW?
I'M GOING TO REST.
COME HELP ME GET RID OF THE CLAY IN MY HAIR. MY NECK IS KILLING ME.
THE REST OF YOU CAN GO. I HOPE YOU LEARNED SOMETHING TODAY.
SOMETHING'S BOTHERING YOU.
W-WHAT?
BEFORE... YOU SAID YOU *SAW NOTHING*. WHAT IS THIS *NOTHING* YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT?
OH, I... IT'S JUST...
SORRY, SIR.
TH-THE MONSTER... SOMEHOW, I... I S-SAW ONE OF ITS EYES. T-T-THE *REAL* EYES AND...
I... I REMEMBERED S-SOMETHING. OR MAYBE I HAD A VISION.
I D-D-DON'T KNOW.
I THINK IN THIS... VISION, I SAW M-M... MY *MOTHER*...
I KNOW YOU TOLD ME TO FORGET ABOUT HER, AND I DID, B-BUT WHY DID THE MONSTER MAKE ME R-R-REMEMBER? AM I INSANE NOW BECAUSE I SAW ITS EYE?
YOU HAVE BEEN MY STUDENT SINCE YOU WERE THREE YEARS OLD.
YOU'RE A HIGHLY INTELLIGENT AND TRUSTWORTHY BOY. SO MUCH SO, THAT I EVEN PUT YOU IN CHARGE OF THE MAKKAS.
BUT YOU HAVE SOMETHING DANGEROUS IN YOU. A DOUBT. *UNFULFILLMENT*. IT'S THE REASON YOU SOMETIMES STUMBLE ON WORDS.
YOUR STUTTER.
YOUR *WITCH MOTHER* PUT IT THERE.
TO BE *MAKAVI*, YOU CAN'T HESITATE. YOU NEED TO BE FIRM.
THE STORIES ABOUT ITS EYES ARE JUST... *FOLKLORE*.
NOW, *GO*. LEAVE ME IN PEACE. TAKE SOME FRUIT ON YOUR WAY OUT.
AS A THANK YOU FOR BRINGING ME YOUR DOUBTS TODAY, AND NEVER AGAIN.
"GOOD NIGHT, AND LET COLOR STAY OUT OF YOUR DREAMS."

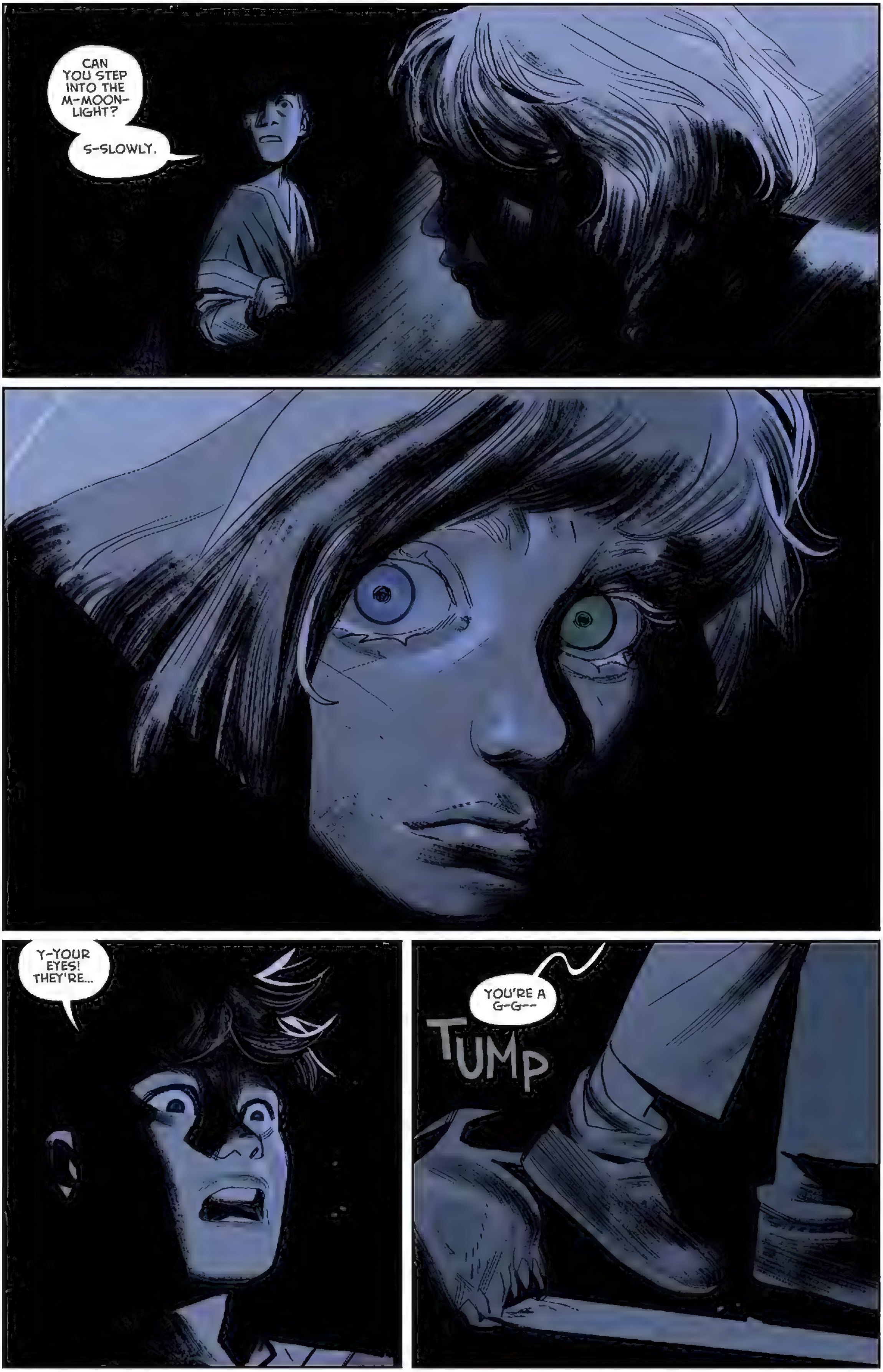

WOW, TODAY WAS REALLY... I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT IT.
YEAH... EVEN THOUGH I COULDN'T SEE THE VENOMOUS TAIL OR THE TONGUE WE HEARD ABOUT.
I DON'T KNOW. I THINK I SAW THE TONGUE!
I WAS VERY CAREFUL NOT TO LOOK IT IN THE EYES, THOUGH!
GUYS! L-LET'S TRY TO SLEEP, IT'S LATE. WE HAVE A LESSON IN THE M-MORNING.
OOOH YEAH, RIGHT. SORRY, ZET.
I'M STILL A LITTLE AGITATED.
GOOD NIGHT, AND LET COLOR STAY OUT OF YOUR DREAMS.
CURSED BE THE COLOR.
ZET, LOOK AWAY!

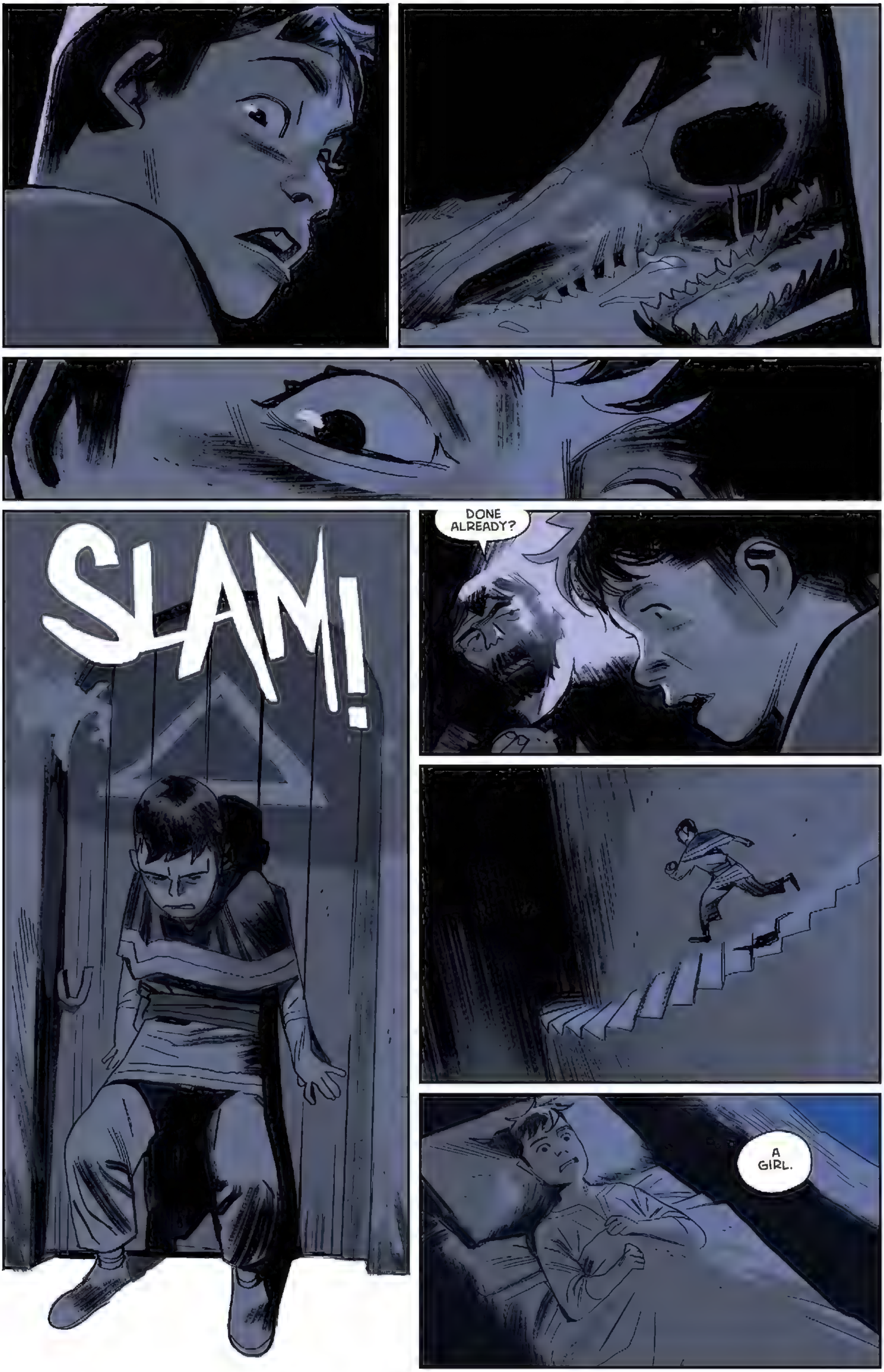

GASP!
KREEK
CLUNK

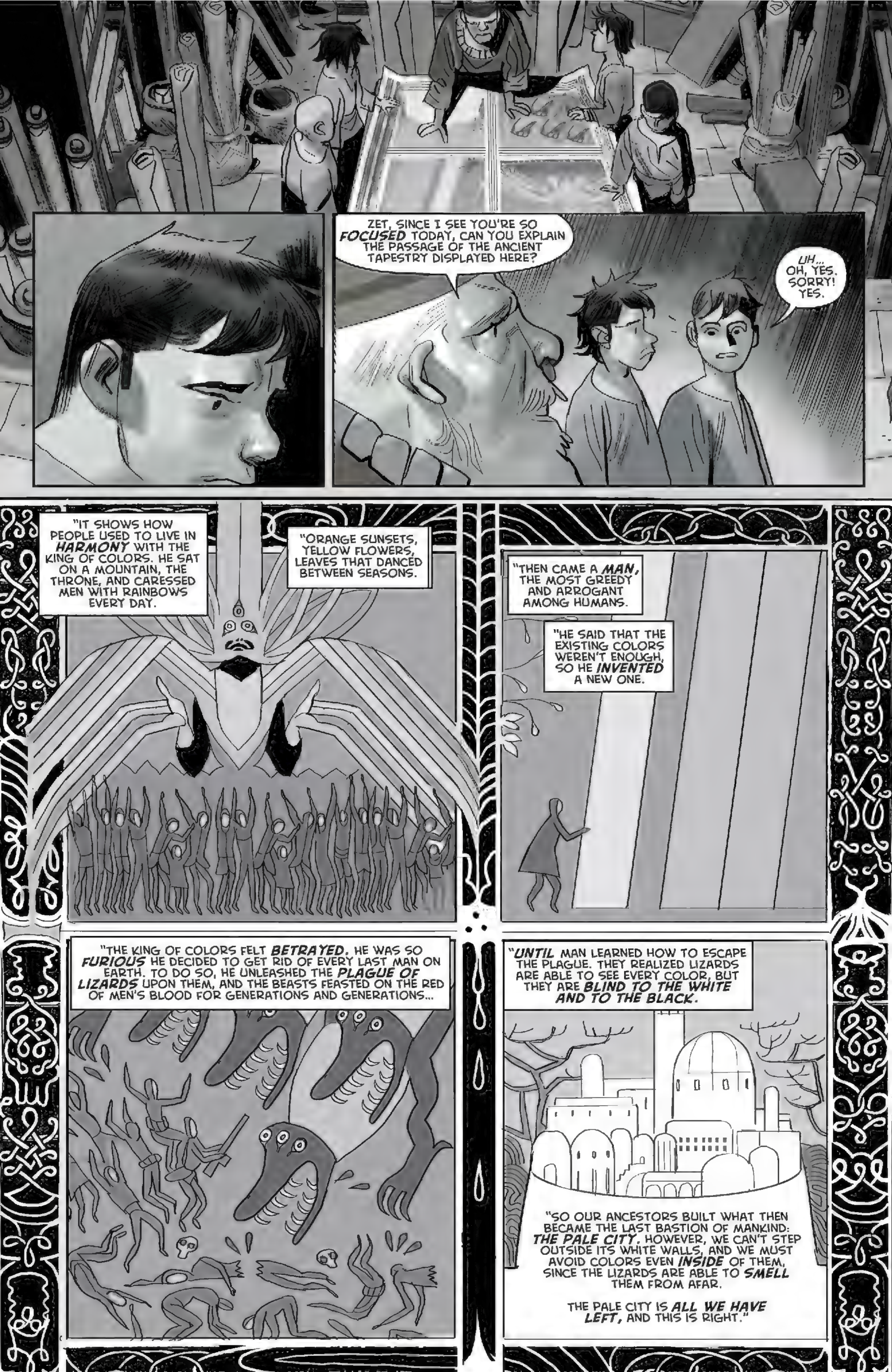

OH, YOUNG MAKKA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP HERE?
I'M... I'M HERE TO SEE THE MONSTER.
IT'S KIND OF A SENSITIVE MATTER. YOU CAN'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT THIS.
THE MAKAVI SENT THIS POMEGRANATE FROM HIS PERSONAL CHAMBERS TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR DISCRETION.
WHOA! IT'S BEEN SO MANY MOONS SINCE--
THANK YOU. IT WON'T TAKE LONG.
WHOA, WAIT... YOU WANT TO GO IN THERE ALONE?
DO YOU WANT THE FRUIT OR NOT?

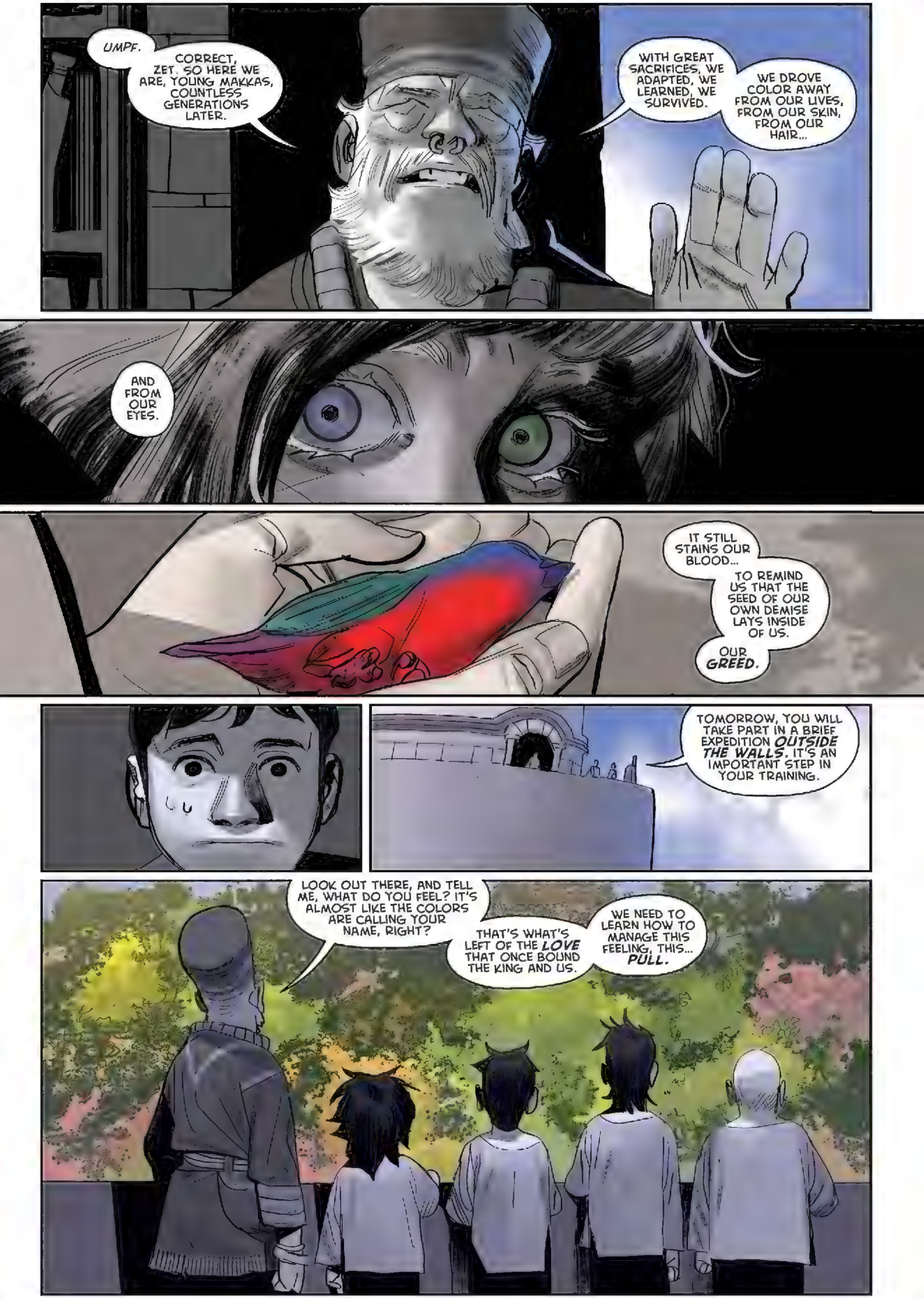

...
WHAT... WHAT AM I EVEN DOING HERE?
CREEAK
HELLO?
HELLO.
YOU... YOU TALK?
IF YOU WANT ME TO.

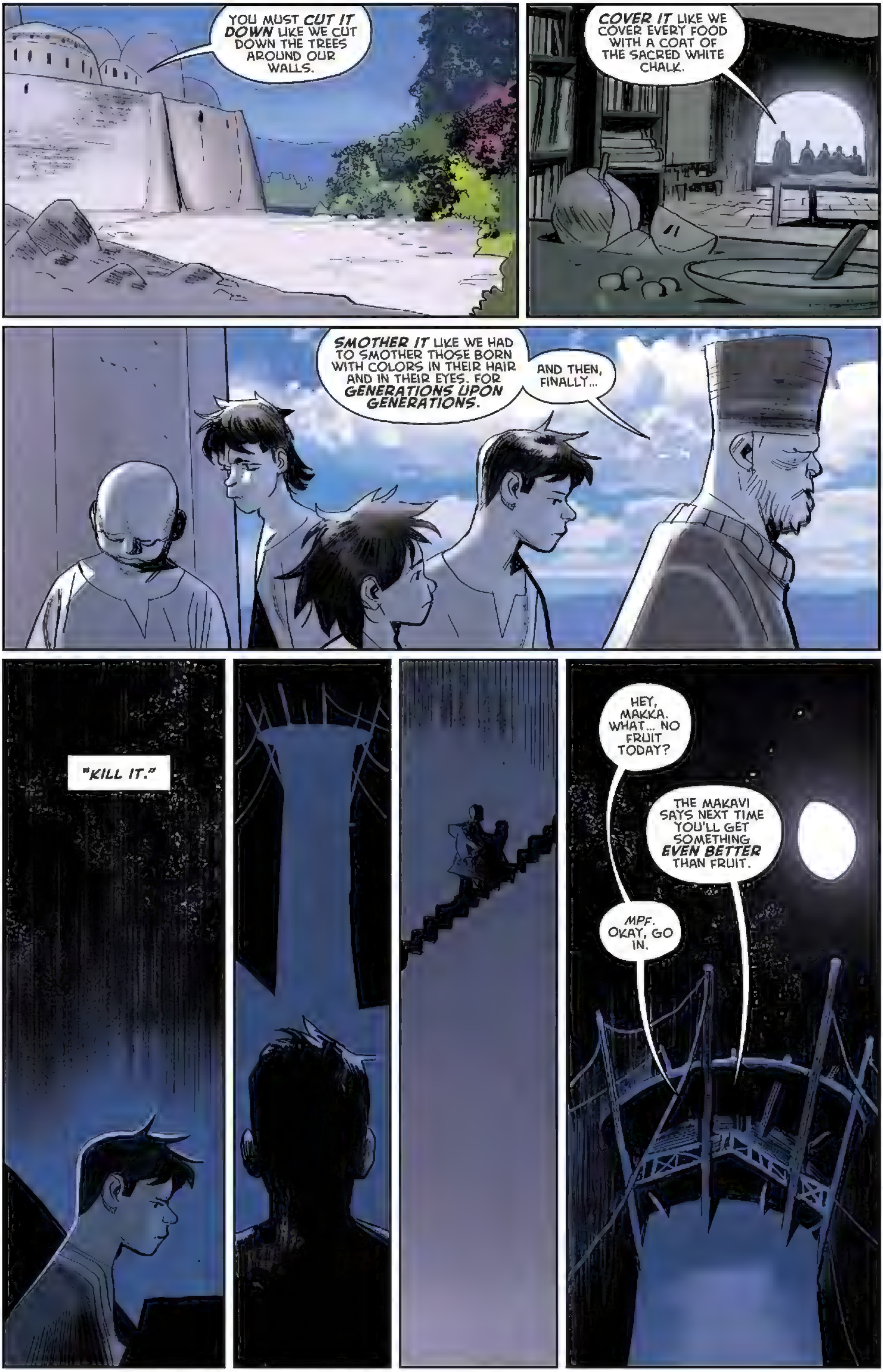

N-NO. I DON'T.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
HEY.
ARE YOU THERE?
YES, BUT YOU TOLD ME NOT TO TALK.
OH YEAH, RIGHT.
DO YOU WANT TO *HURT ME?*
WHAT? NO. WHY...
BECAUSE *I DESERVE IT.* SOMETIMES PEOPLE HURT ME. THAT IS RIGHT.
IT'S EITHER RIGHT OR WRONG. THERE'S NO THIRD WAY. AND IT CAN'T BE WRONG, SINCE I *AM* WHAT IS WRONG.
THAT... THAT M-MAKES SENSE, BUT I'M NOT HERE TO HURT YOU.
OH.
D-DID...
DID YOUR EYES DO SOMETHING TO ME?
MY EYES ARE *POOLS OF DESPERATION,* THE MAKAVI SAYS. THEY ARE *THE BEGINNING OF THE END,* HE SAYS.
YES, HE SAYS THAT... BUT CAN THEY REALLY TURN PEOPLE *INSANE?*
I DON'T KNOW. WHAT IS INSANE?
WELL... ME BEING HERE IS INSANE.

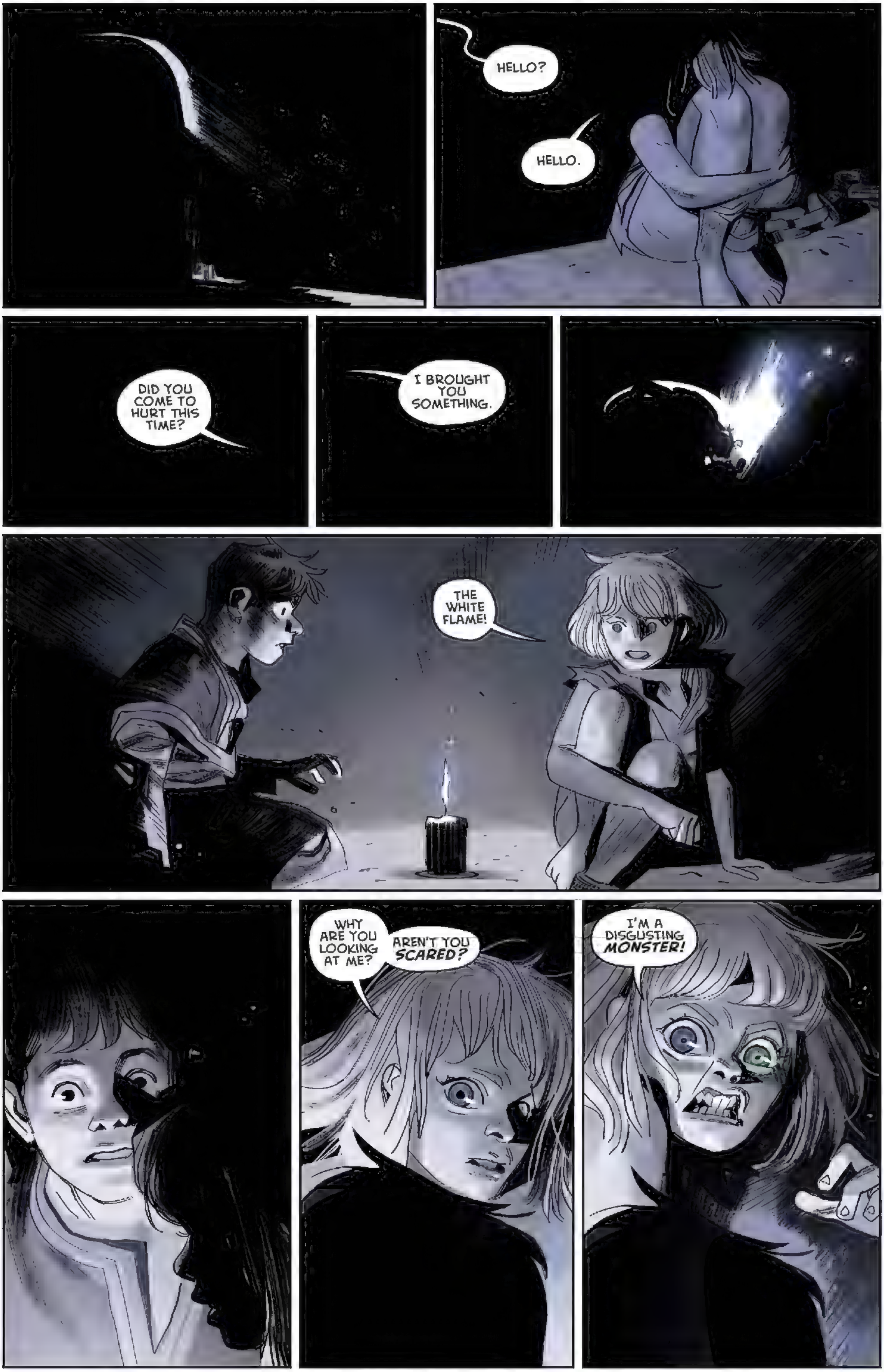

CAN YOU STEP INTO THE M-MOON-LIGHT?
S-SLOWLY.
Y-YOUR EYES! THEY'RE...
YOU'RE A G-G--
TUMP

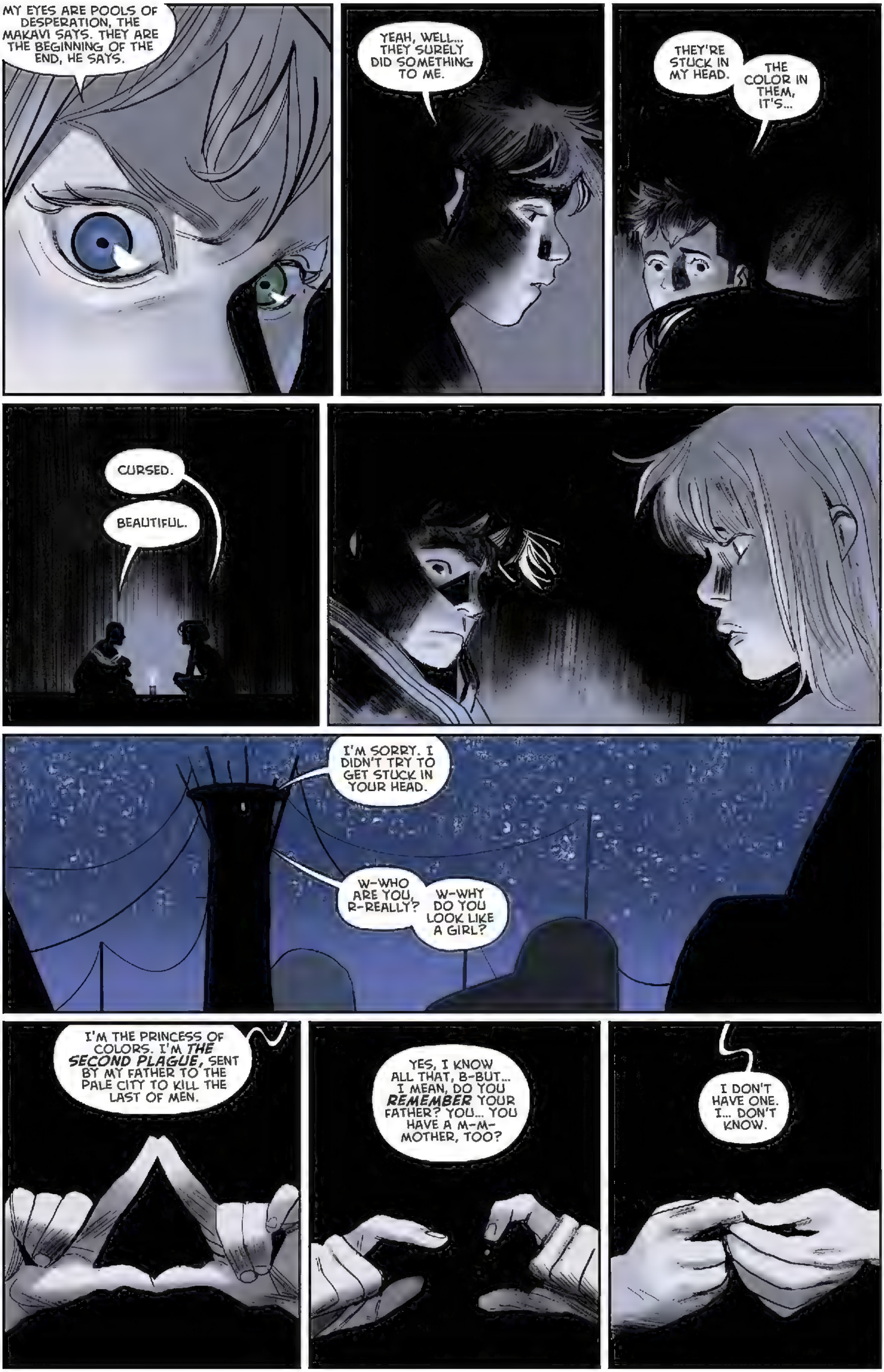

SLAM!
DONE ALREADY?
A GIRL.

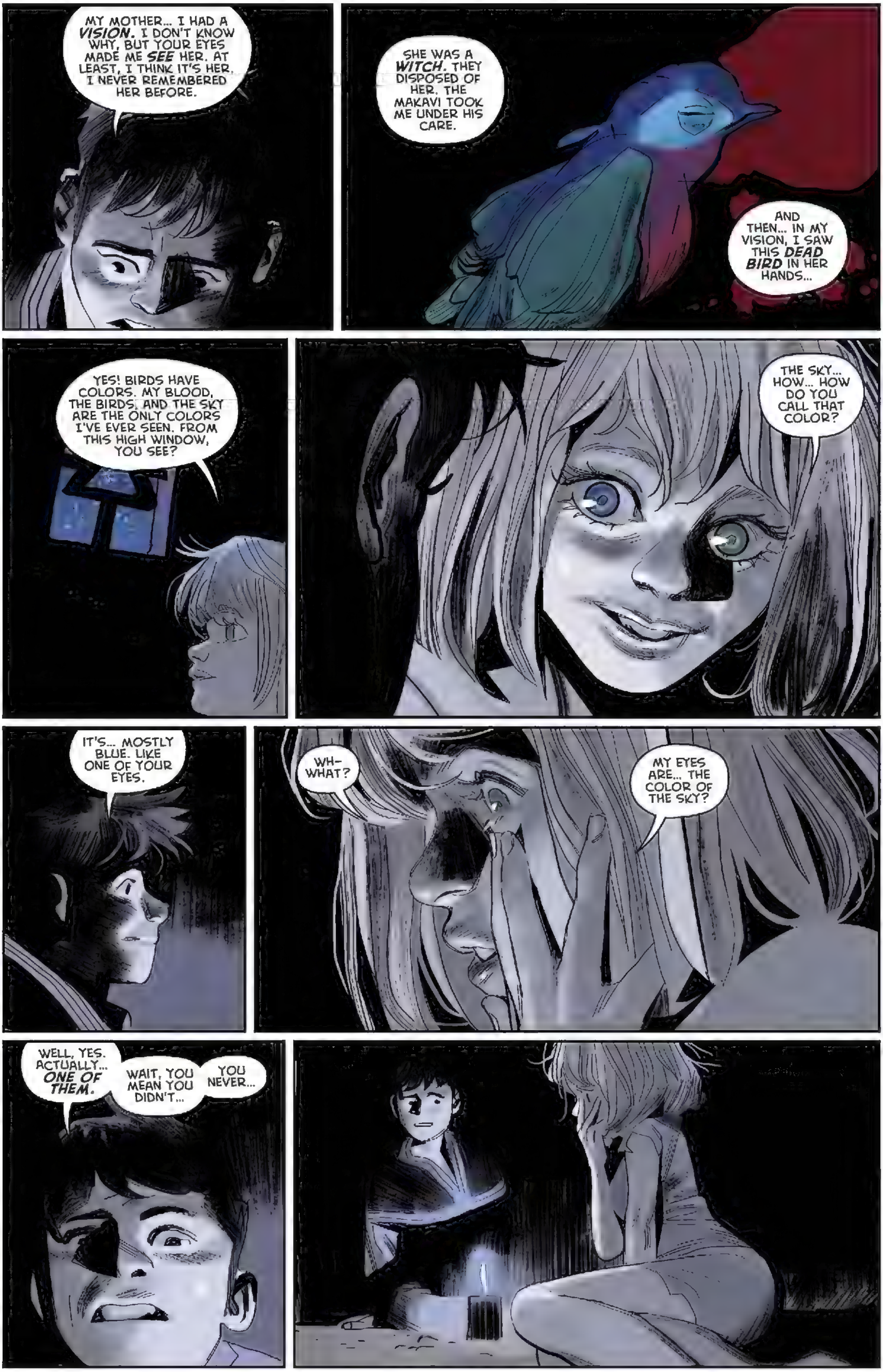

ZET, SINCE I SEE YOU'RE SO *FOCUSED* TODAY, CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE PASSAGE OF THE ANCIENT TAPESTRY DISPLAYED HERE?
UH... OH, YES. SORRY! YES.
"IT SHOWS HOW PEOPLE USED TO LIVE IN *HARMONY* WITH THE KING OF COLORS. HE SAT ON A MOUNTAIN, THE THRONE, AND CARESSED MEN WITH RAINBOWS EVERY DAY.
"ORANGE SUNSETS, YELLOW FLOWERS, LEAVES THAT DANCED BETWEEN SEASONS.
"THEN CAME A *MAN*, THE MOST GREEDY AND ARROGANT AMONG HUMANS.
"HE SAID THAT THE EXISTING COLORS WEREN'T ENOUGH, SO HE *INVENTED* A NEW ONE.
"THE KING OF COLORS FELT ***BETRAYED***. HE WAS SO *FURIOUS* HE DECIDED TO GET RID OF EVERY LAST MAN ON EARTH. TO DO SO, HE UNLEASHED THE *PLAGUE OF LIZARDS* UPON THEM, AND THE BEASTS FEASTED ON THE RED OF MEN'S BLOOD FOR GENERATIONS AND GENERATIONS...
"*UNTIL* MAN LEARNED HOW TO ESCAPE THE PLAGUE. THEY REALIZED LIZARDS ARE ABLE TO SEE EVERY COLOR, BUT THEY ARE ***BLIND TO THE WHITE AND TO THE BLACK***.
"SO OUR ANCESTORS BUILT WHAT THEN BECAME THE LAST BASTION OF MANKIND: ***THE PALE CITY***. HOWEVER, WE CAN'T STEP OUTSIDE ITS WHITE WALLS, AND WE MUST AVOID COLORS EVEN *INSIDE* OF THEM, SINCE THE LIZARDS ARE ABLE TO *SMELL* THEM FROM AFAR.
THE PALE CITY IS ***ALL WE HAVE LEFT***, AND THIS IS RIGHT."

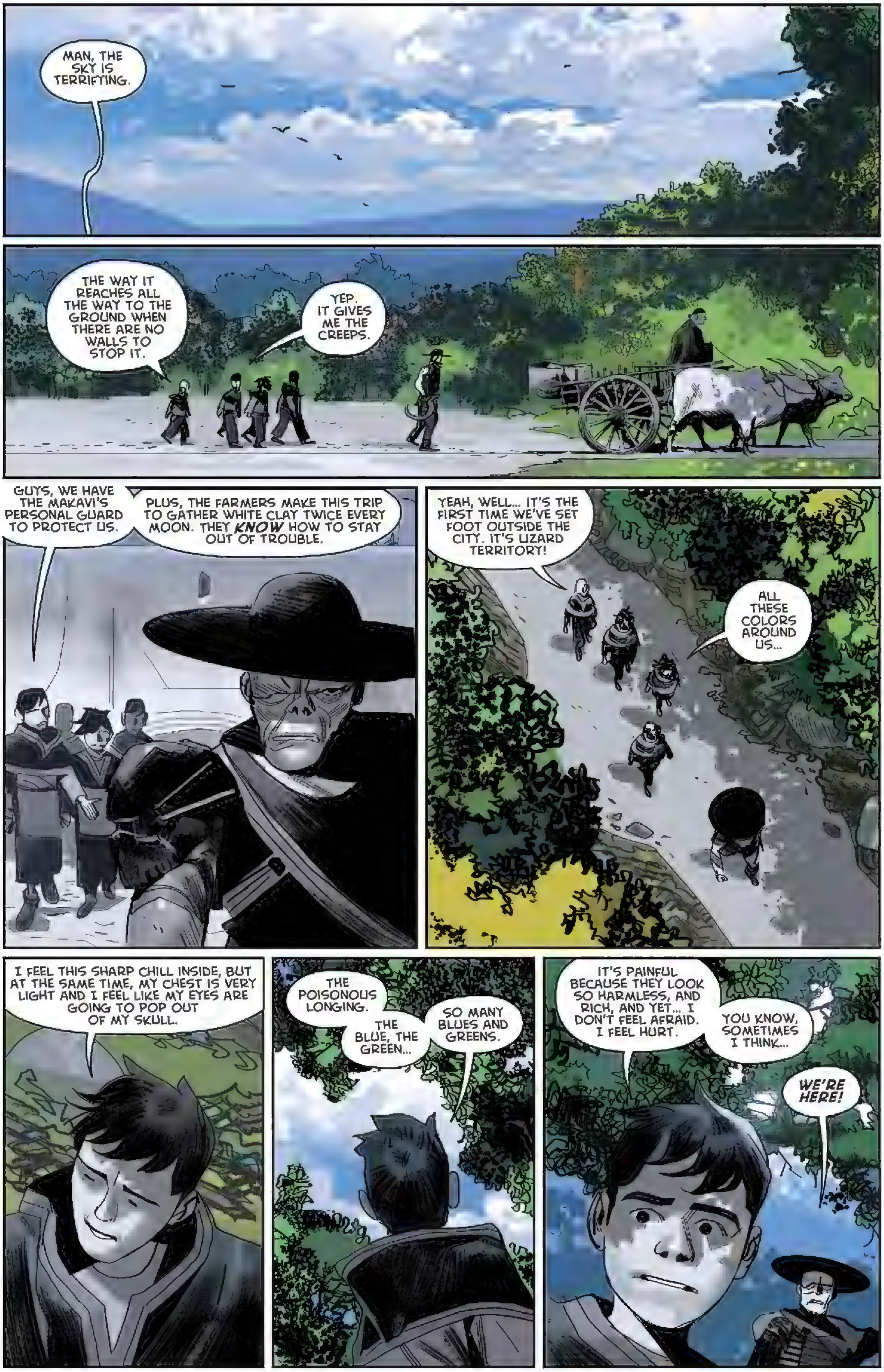

UMPF.
CORRECT, ZET. SO HERE WE ARE, YOUNG MAKKAS, COUNTLESS GENERATIONS LATER.
WITH GREAT SACRIFICES, WE ADAPTED, WE LEARNED, WE SURVIVED.
WE DROVE COLOR AWAY FROM OUR LIVES, FROM OUR SKIN, FROM OUR HAIR...
AND FROM OUR EYES.
IT STILL STAINS OUR BLOOD...
TO REMIND US THAT THE SEED OF OUR OWN DEMISE LAYS INSIDE OF US.
OUR ***GREED.***
TOMORROW, YOU WILL TAKE PART IN A BRIEF EXPEDITION ***OUTSIDE THE WALLS.*** IT'S AN IMPORTANT STEP IN YOUR TRAINING.
LOOK OUT THERE, AND TELL ME, WHAT DO YOU FEEL? IT'S ALMOST LIKE THE COLORS ARE CALLING YOUR NAME, RIGHT?
THAT'S WHAT'S LEFT OF THE ***LOVE*** THAT ONCE BOUND THE KING AND US.
WE NEED TO LEARN HOW TO MANAGE THIS FEELING, THIS... ***PULL.***

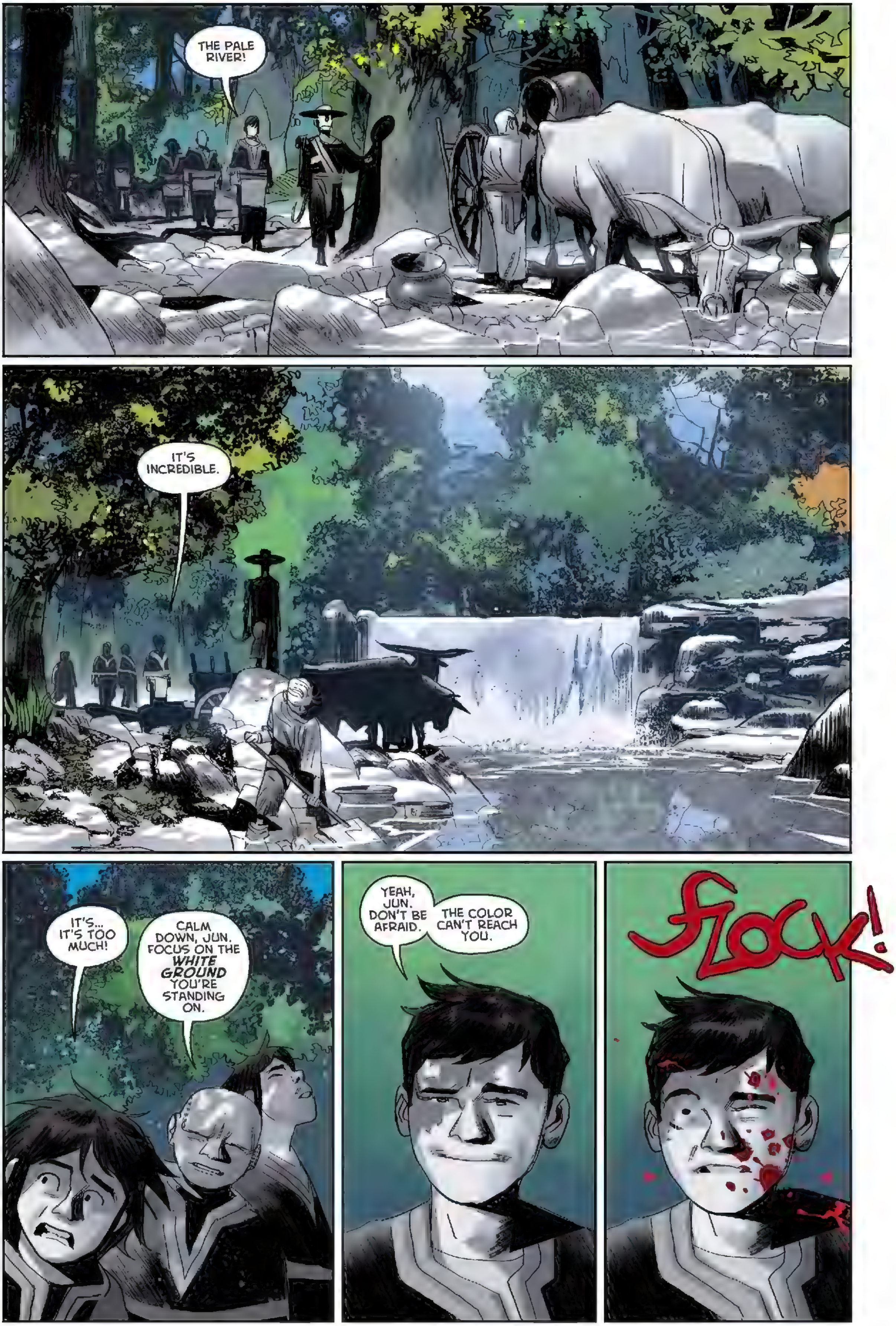

YOU MUST CUT IT DOWN LIKE WE CUT DOWN THE TREES AROUND OUR WALLS.
COVER IT LIKE WE COVER EVERY FOOD WITH A COAT OF THE SACRED WHITE CHALK.
SMOTHER IT LIKE WE HAD TO SMOTHER THOSE BORN WITH COLORS IN THEIR HAIR AND IN THEIR EYES. FOR GENERATIONS UPON GENERATIONS.
AND THEN, FINALLY...
"KILL IT."
HEY, MAKKA. WHAT... NO FRUIT TODAY?
THE MAKAVI SAYS NEXT TIME YOU'LL GET SOMETHING EVEN BETTER THAN FRUIT.
MPF. OKAY, GO IN.

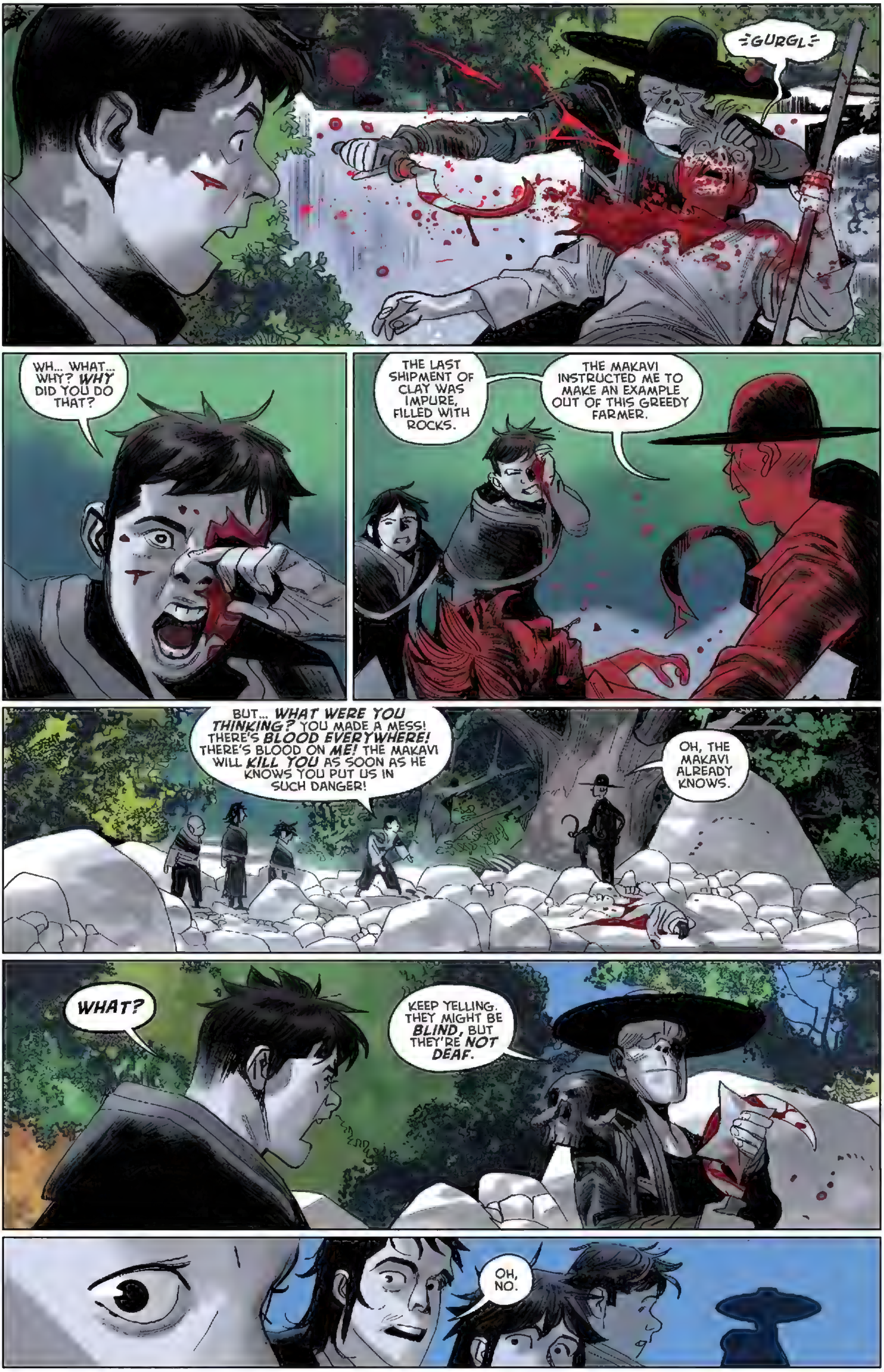

HELLO?
HELLO.
DID YOU COME TO HURT THIS TIME?
I BROUGHT YOU SOMETHING.
THE WHITE FLAME!
WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME?
AREN'T YOU *SCARED?*
I'M A DISGUSTING ***MONSTER!***

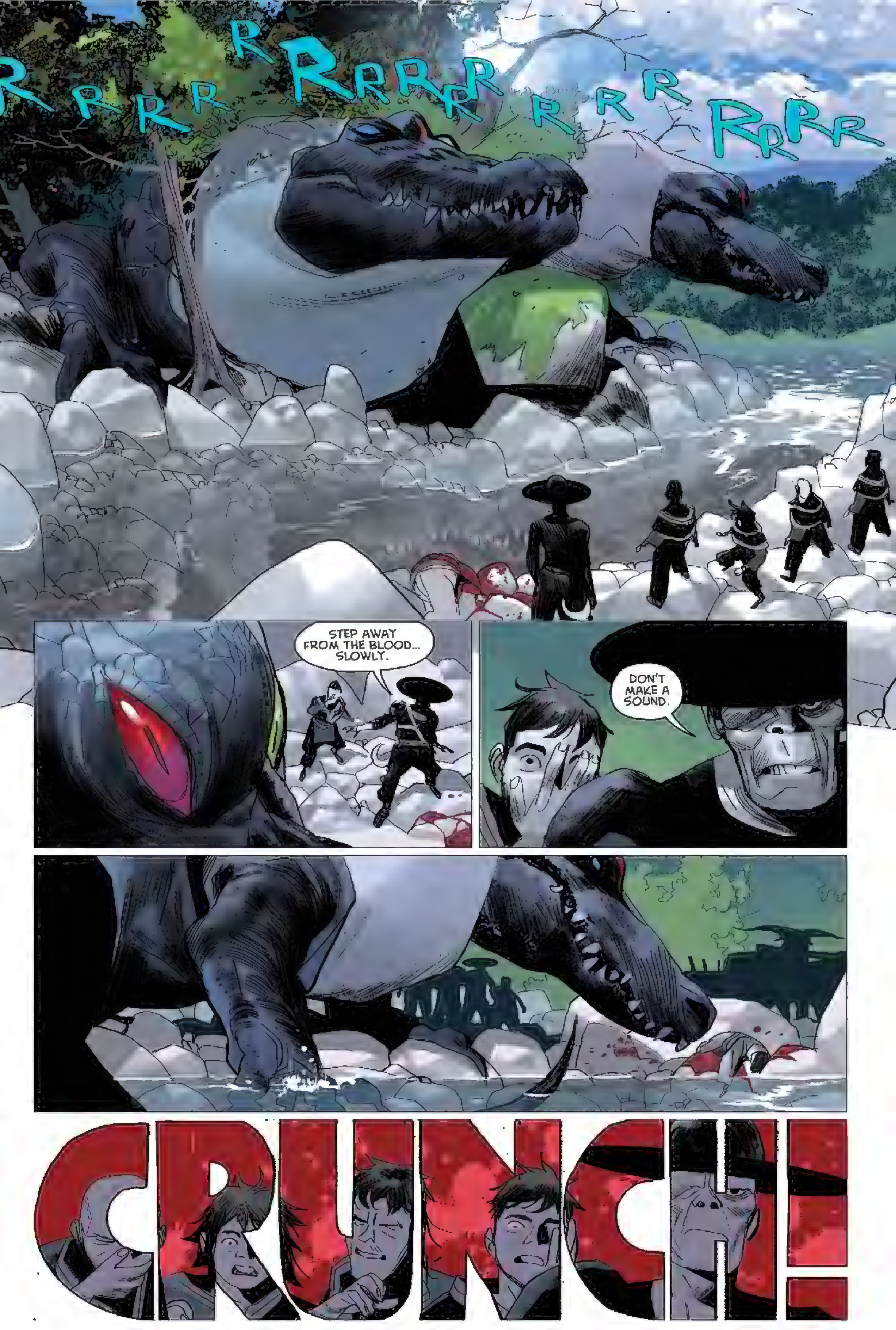

MY EYES ARE POOLS OF DESPERATION, THE MAKAVI SAYS. THEY ARE THE BEGINNING OF THE END, HE SAYS.
YEAH, WELL... THEY SURELY DID SOMETHING TO ME.
THEY'RE STUCK IN MY HEAD.
THE COLOR IN THEM, IT'S...
CURSED.
BEAUTIFUL.
I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T TRY TO GET STUCK IN YOUR HEAD.
W-WHO ARE YOU, R-REALLY?
W-WHY DO YOU LOOK LIKE A GIRL?
I'M THE PRINCESS OF COLORS. I'M *THE SECOND PLAGUE,* SENT BY MY FATHER TO THE PALE CITY TO KILL THE LAST OF MEN.
YES, I KNOW ALL THAT, B-BUT... I MEAN, DO YOU *REMEMBER* YOUR FATHER? YOU... YOU HAVE A M-M-MOTHER, TOO?
I DON'T HAVE ONE. I... DON'T KNOW.

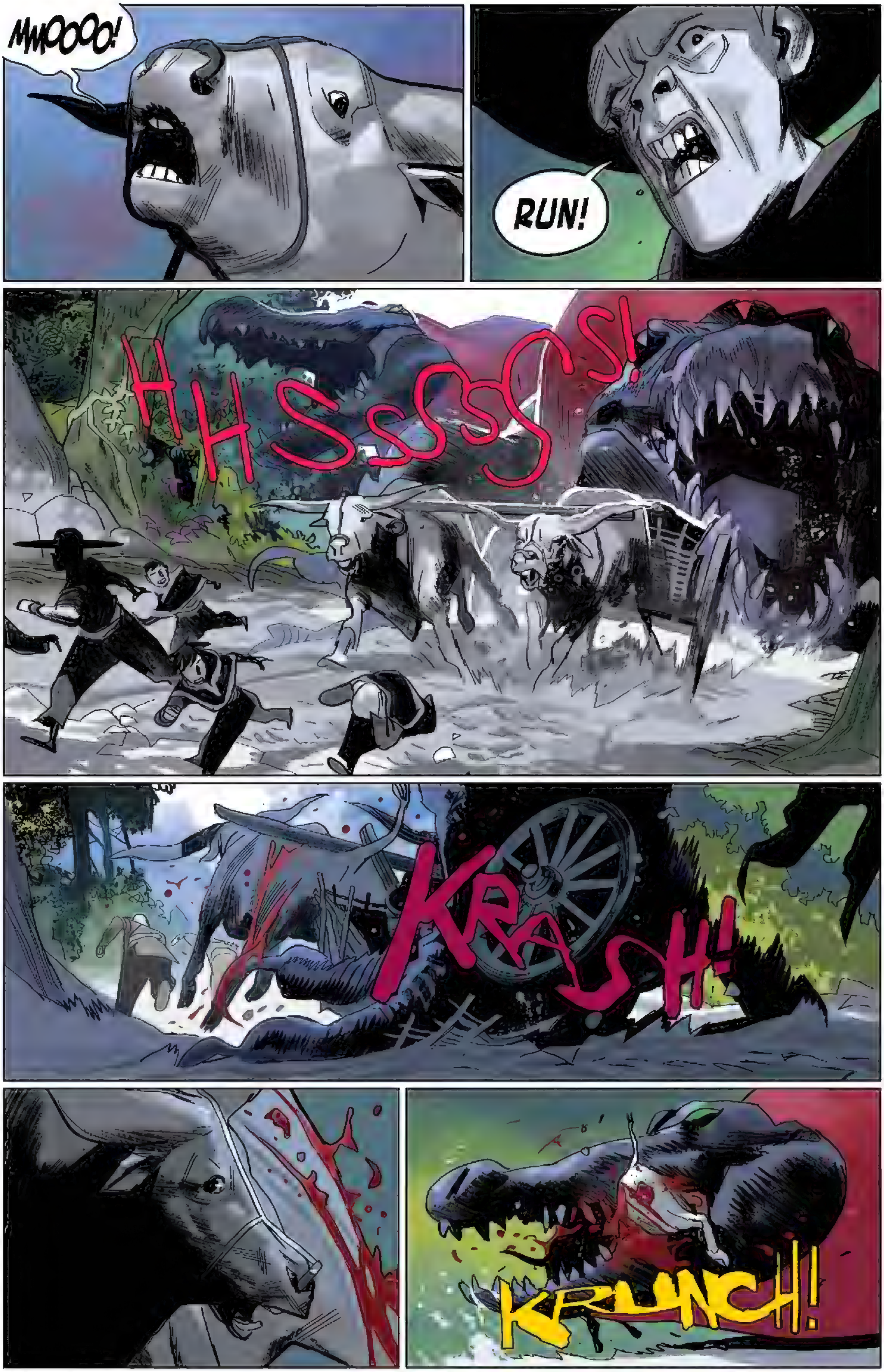

MY MOTHER... I HAD A *VISION.* I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT YOUR EYES MADE ME *SEE* HER. AT LEAST, I THINK IT'S HER. I NEVER REMEMBERED HER BEFORE.
SHE WAS A *WITCH.* THEY DISPOSED OF HER. THE MAKAVI TOOK ME UNDER HIS CARE.
AND THEN... IN MY VISION, I SAW THIS *DEAD BIRD* IN HER HANDS...
YES! BIRDS HAVE COLORS. MY BLOOD, THE BIRDS, AND THE SKY ARE THE ONLY COLORS I'VE EVER SEEN. FROM THIS HIGH WINDOW, YOU SEE?
THE SKY... HOW... HOW DO YOU CALL THAT COLOR?
IT'S... MOSTLY BLUE. LIKE ONE OF YOUR EYES.
WH-WHAT?
MY EYES ARE... THE COLOR OF THE SKY?
WELL, YES. ACTUALLY... *ONE OF THEM.*
WAIT, YOU MEAN YOU DIDN'T...
YOU NEVER...

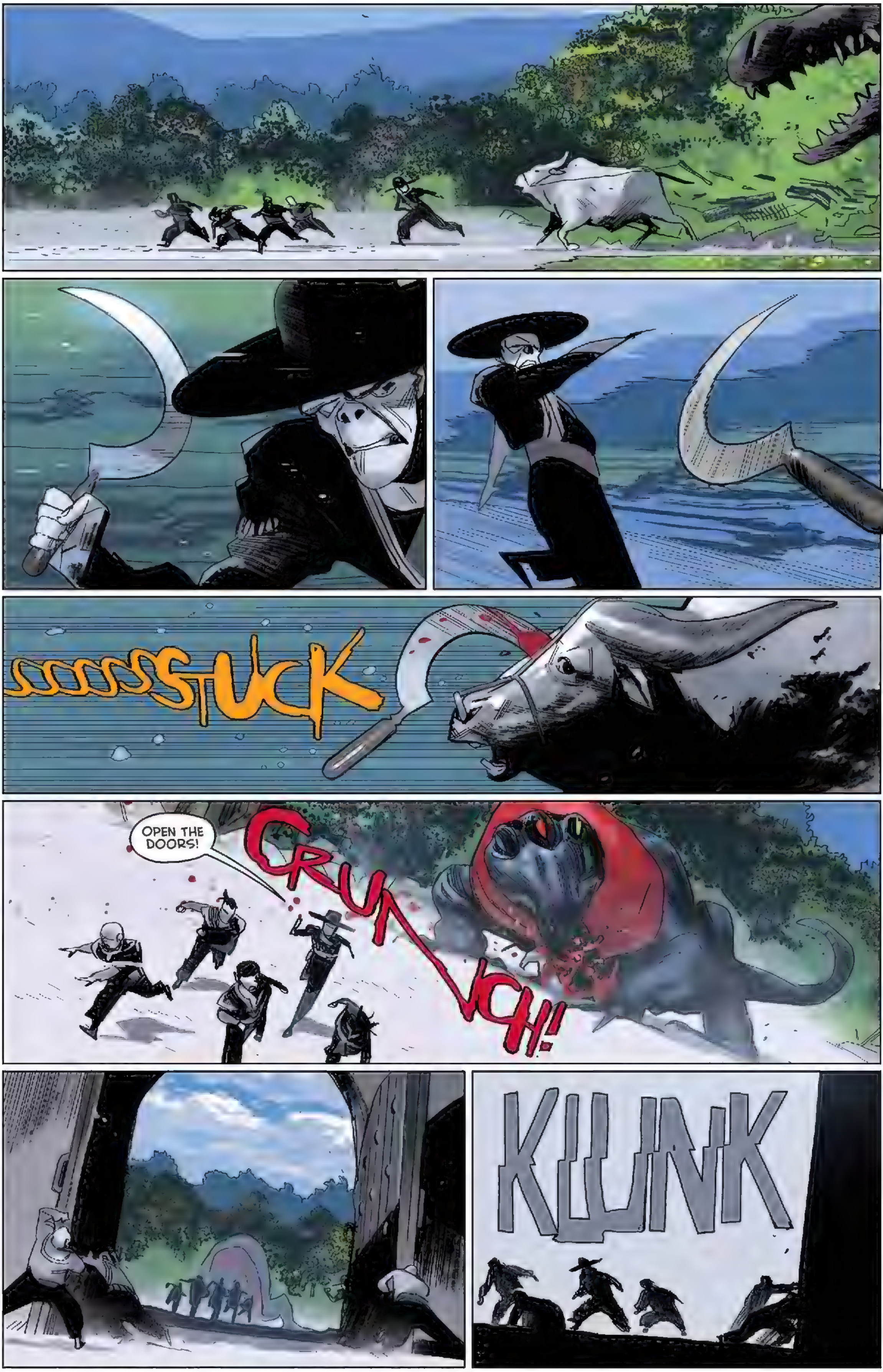

MAN, THE SKY IS TERRIFYING.
THE WAY IT REACHES ALL THE WAY TO THE GROUND WHEN THERE ARE NO WALLS TO STOP IT.
YEP. IT GIVES ME THE CREEPS.
GUYS, WE HAVE THE MAKAVI'S PERSONAL GUARD TO PROTECT US.
PLUS, THE FARMERS MAKE THIS TRIP TO GATHER WHITE CLAY TWICE EVERY MOON. THEY *KNOW* HOW TO STAY OUT OF TROUBLE.
YEAH, WELL... IT'S THE FIRST TIME WE'VE SET FOOT OUTSIDE THE CITY. IT'S LIZARD TERRITORY!
ALL THESE COLORS AROUND US...
I FEEL THIS SHARP CHILL INSIDE, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, MY CHEST IS VERY LIGHT AND I FEEL LIKE MY EYES ARE GOING TO POP OUT OF MY SKULL.
THE POISONOUS LONGING.
THE BLUE, THE GREEN...
SO MANY BLUES AND GREENS.
IT'S PAINFUL BECAUSE THEY LOOK SO HARMLESS, AND RICH, AND YET... I DON'T FEEL AFRAID. I FEEL HURT.
YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES I THINK...
WE'RE HERE!

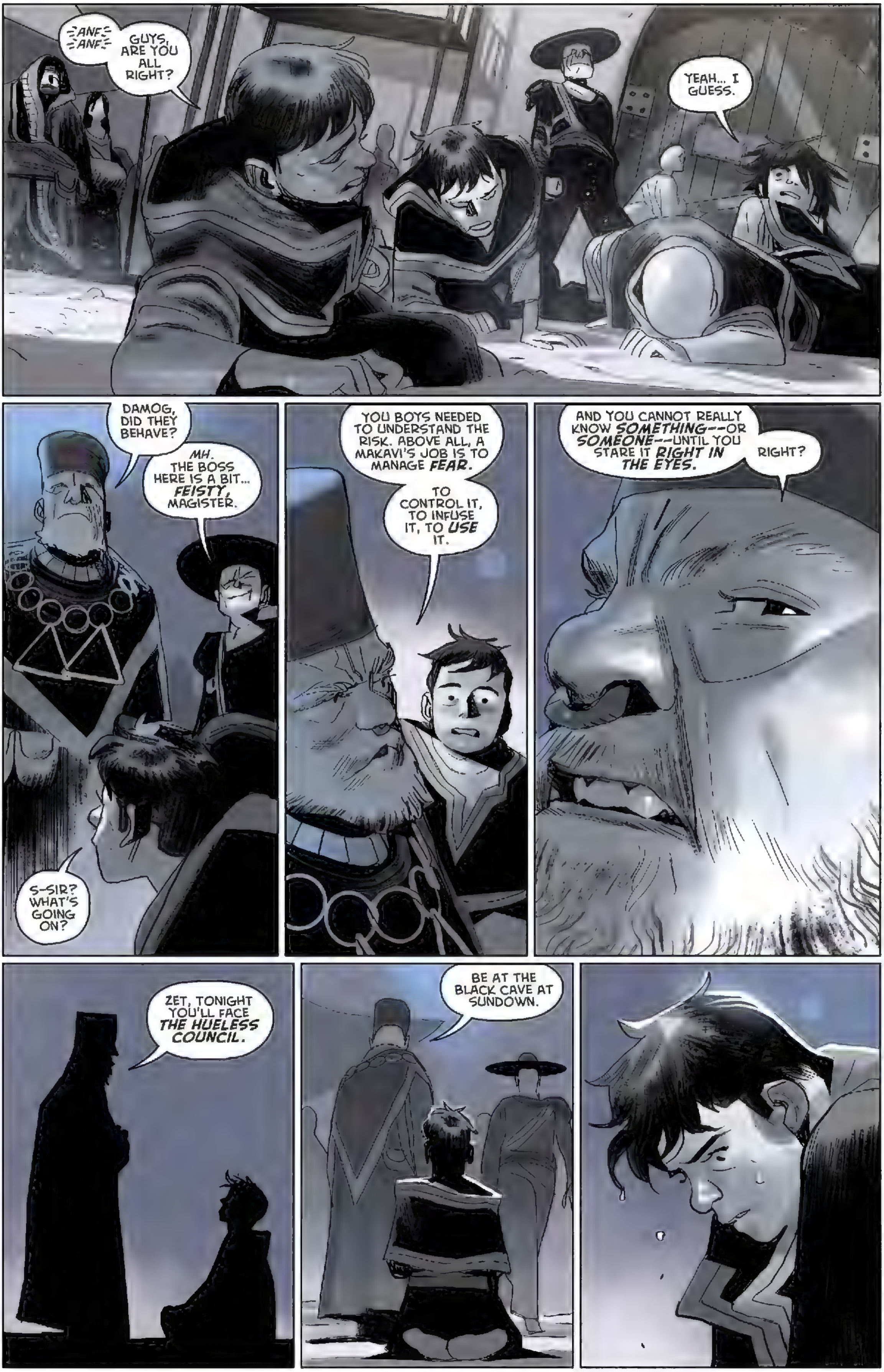

THE PALE RIVER!
IT'S INCREDIBLE.
IT'S... IT'S TOO MUCH!
CALM DOWN, JUN. FOCUS ON THE ***WHITE GROUND*** YOU'RE STANDING ON.
YEAH, JUN. DON'T BE AFRAID.
THE COLOR CAN'T REACH YOU.
FLOCK!

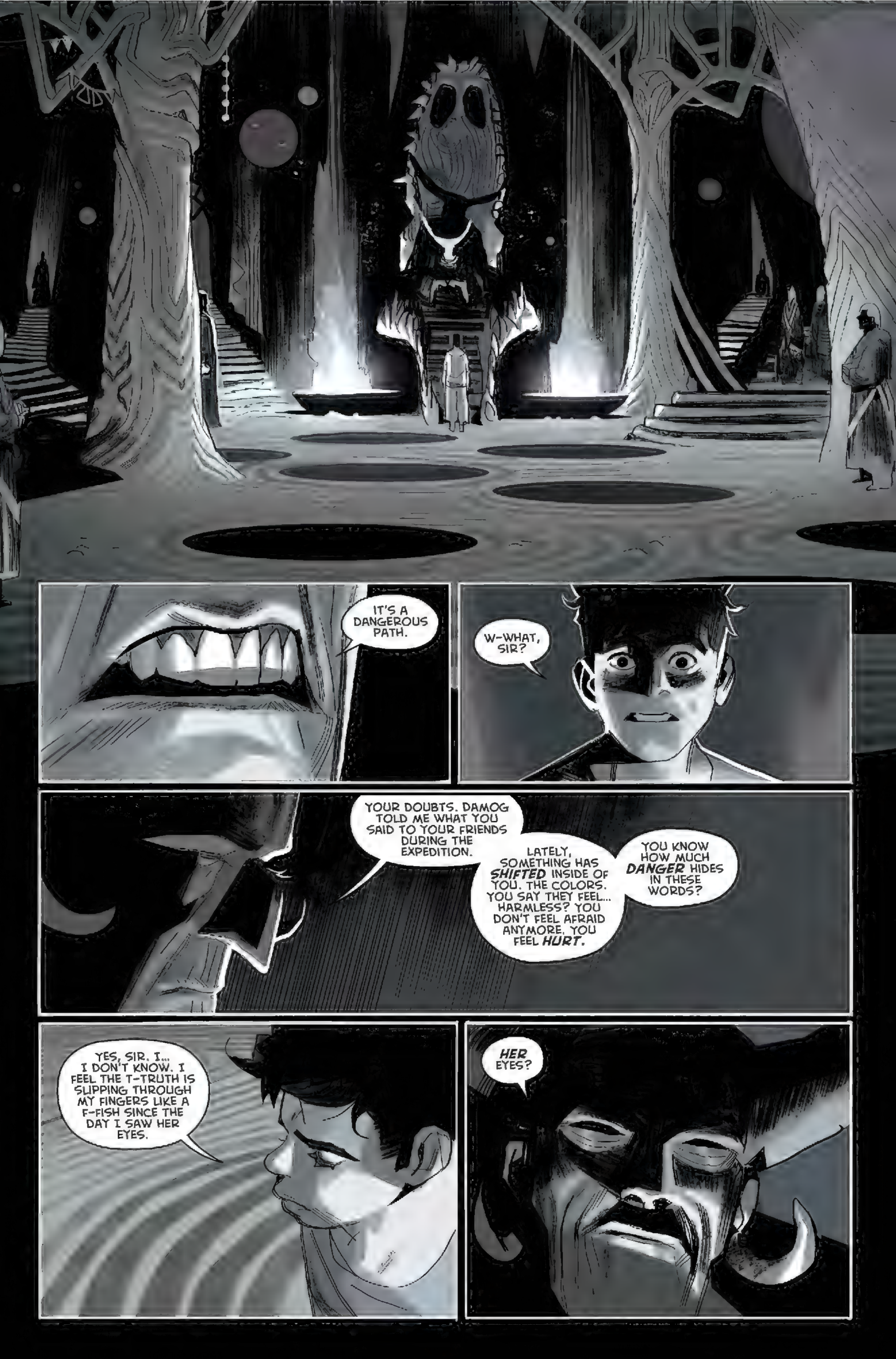

GURGL
WH... WHAT... WHY? *WHY* DID YOU DO THAT?
THE LAST SHIPMENT OF CLAY WAS IMPURE, FILLED WITH ROCKS.
THE MAKAVI INSTRUCTED ME TO MAKE AN EXAMPLE OUT OF THIS GREEDY FARMER.
BUT... *WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?* YOU MADE A MESS! THERE'S *BLOOD EVERYWHERE!* THERE'S BLOOD ON *ME!* THE MAKAVI WILL *KILL YOU* AS SOON AS HE KNOWS YOU PUT US IN SUCH DANGER!
OH, THE MAKAVI ALREADY KNOWS.
WHAT?
KEEP YELLING. THEY MIGHT BE *BLIND*, BUT THEY'RE *NOT DEAF*.
OH, NO.

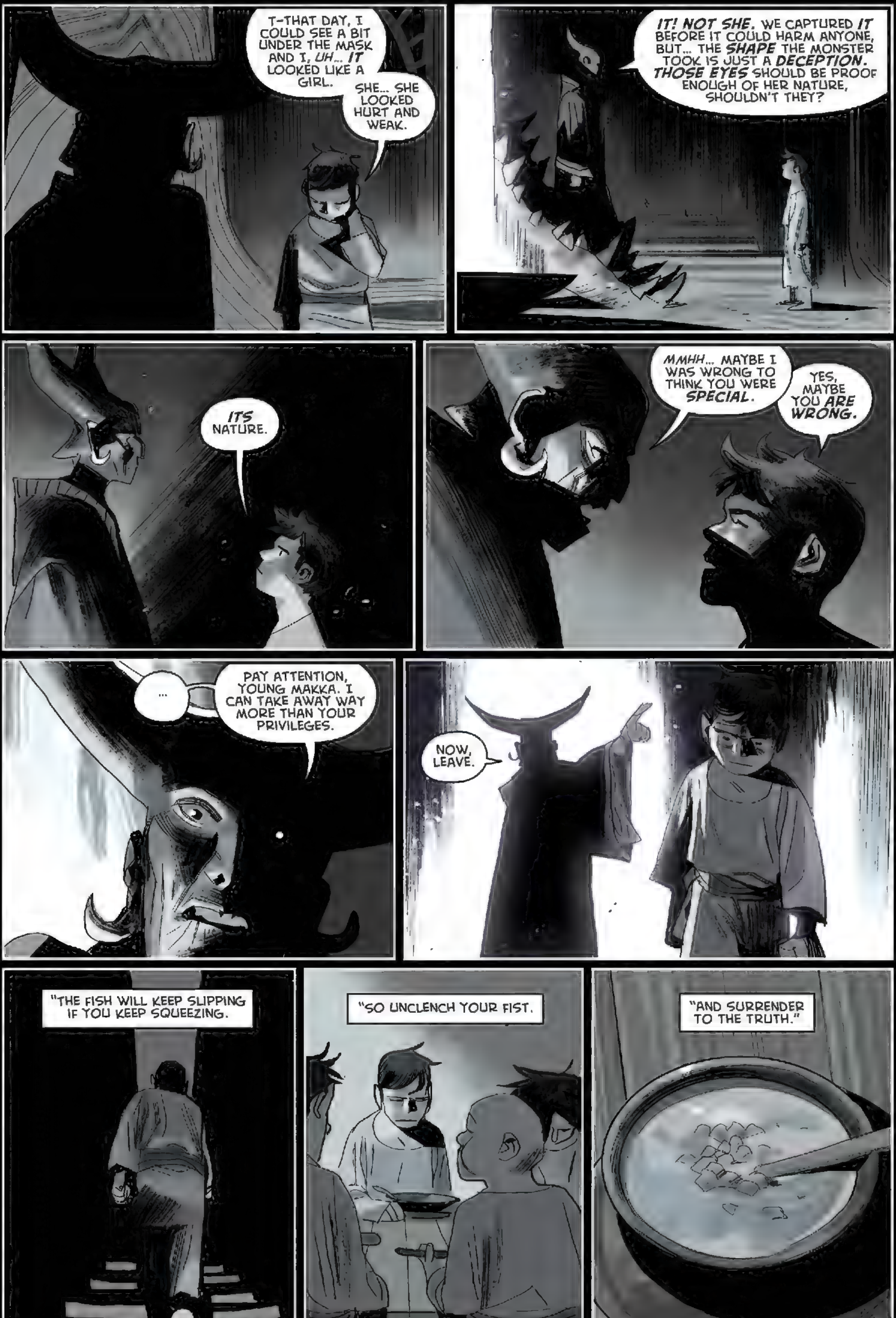

RRRRR R RRRRRRR RRRRRR RRRRR
STEP AWAY FROM THE BLOOD... SLOWLY.
DON'T MAKE A SOUND.
CRUNCH!

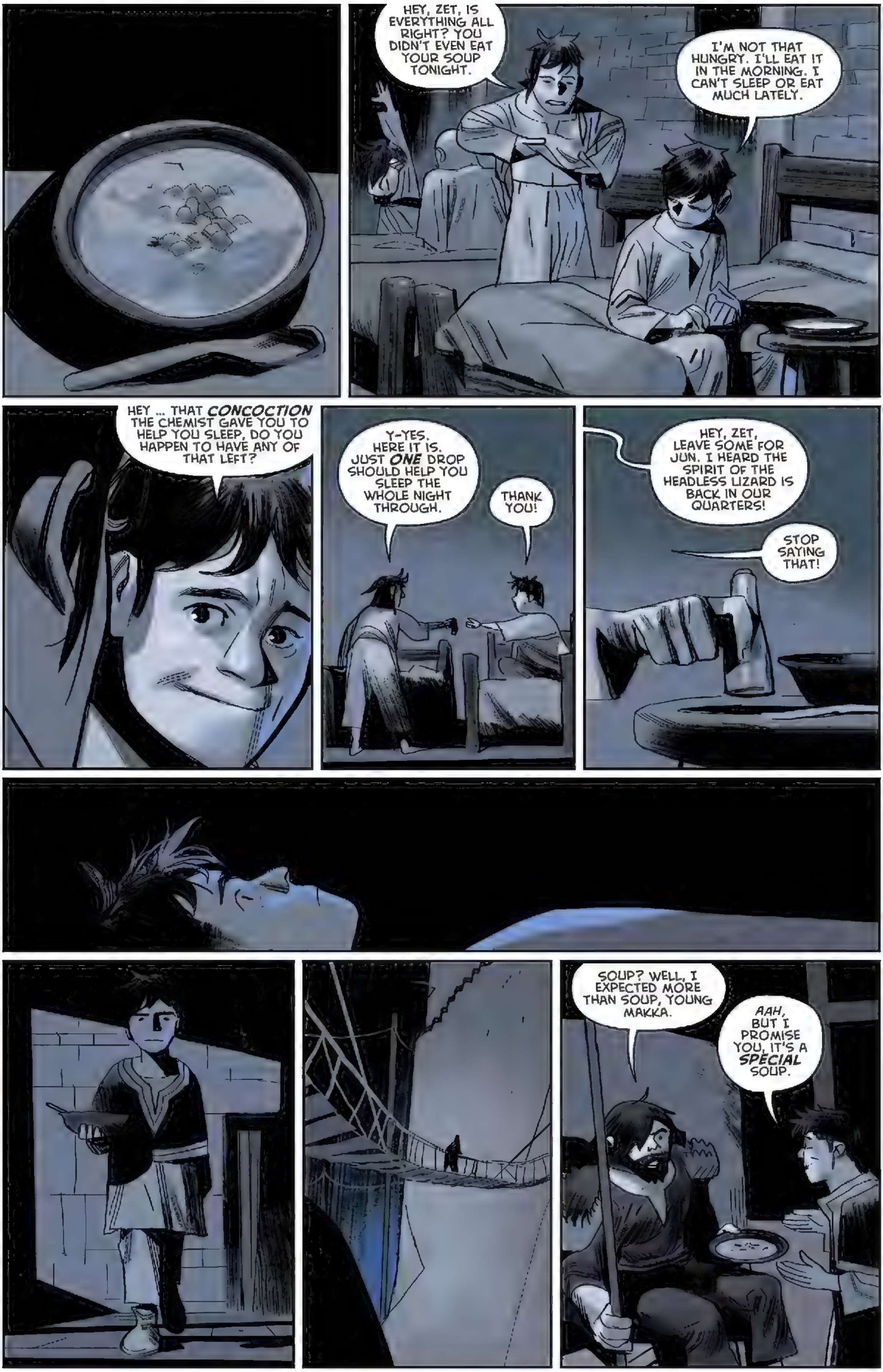

MMOOOO!
RUN!
HHSSSSSS!
KRASH!
KRUNCH!

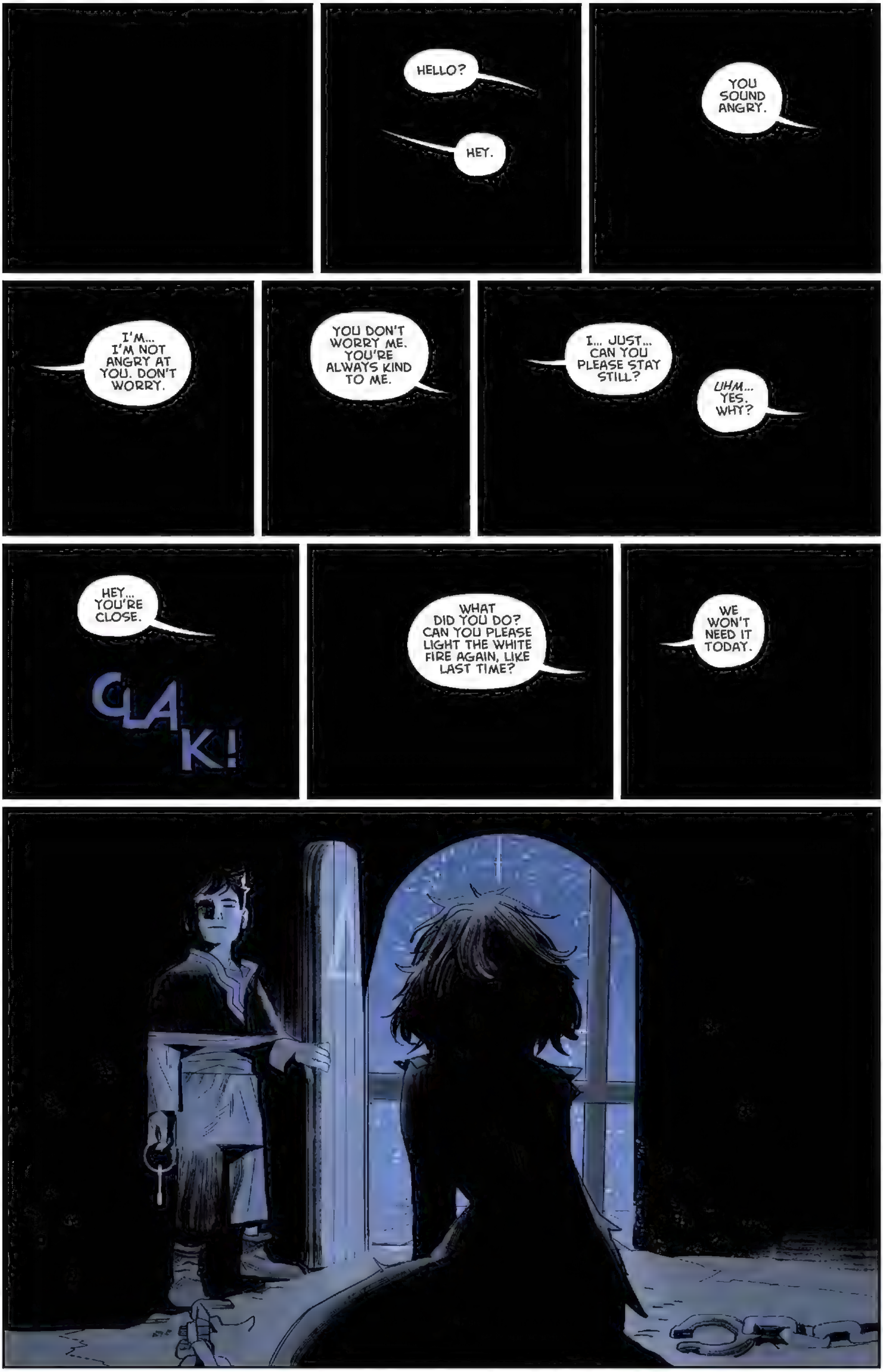

sssssSTUCK
OPEN THE DOORS!
CRUNCH!
KLUNK

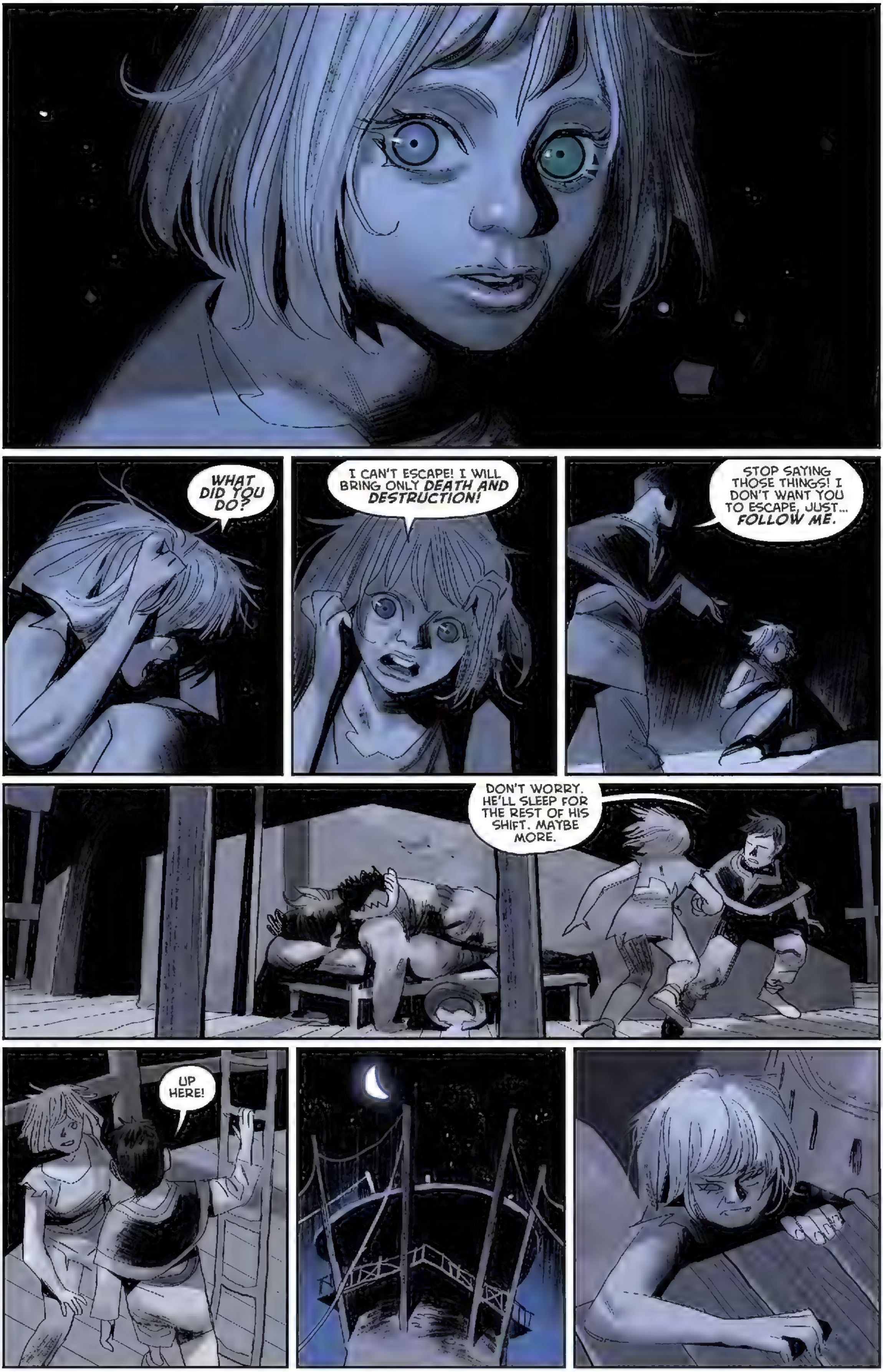

ANF ANF
GUYS, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YEAH... I GUESS.
DAMOG, DID THEY BEHAVE?
MH. THE BOSS HERE IS A BIT... **FEISTY**, MAGISTER.
S-SIR? WHAT'S GOING ON?
YOU BOYS NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND THE RISK. ABOVE ALL, A MAKAVI'S JOB IS TO MANAGE **FEAR**.
TO CONTROL IT, TO INFUSE IT, TO **USE** IT.
AND YOU CANNOT REALLY KNOW **SOMETHING**--OR **SOMEONE**--UNTIL YOU STARE IT **RIGHT IN THE EYES**.
RIGHT?
ZET, TONIGHT YOU'LL FACE **THE HUELESS COUNCIL**.
BE AT THE BLACK CAVE AT SUNDOWN.

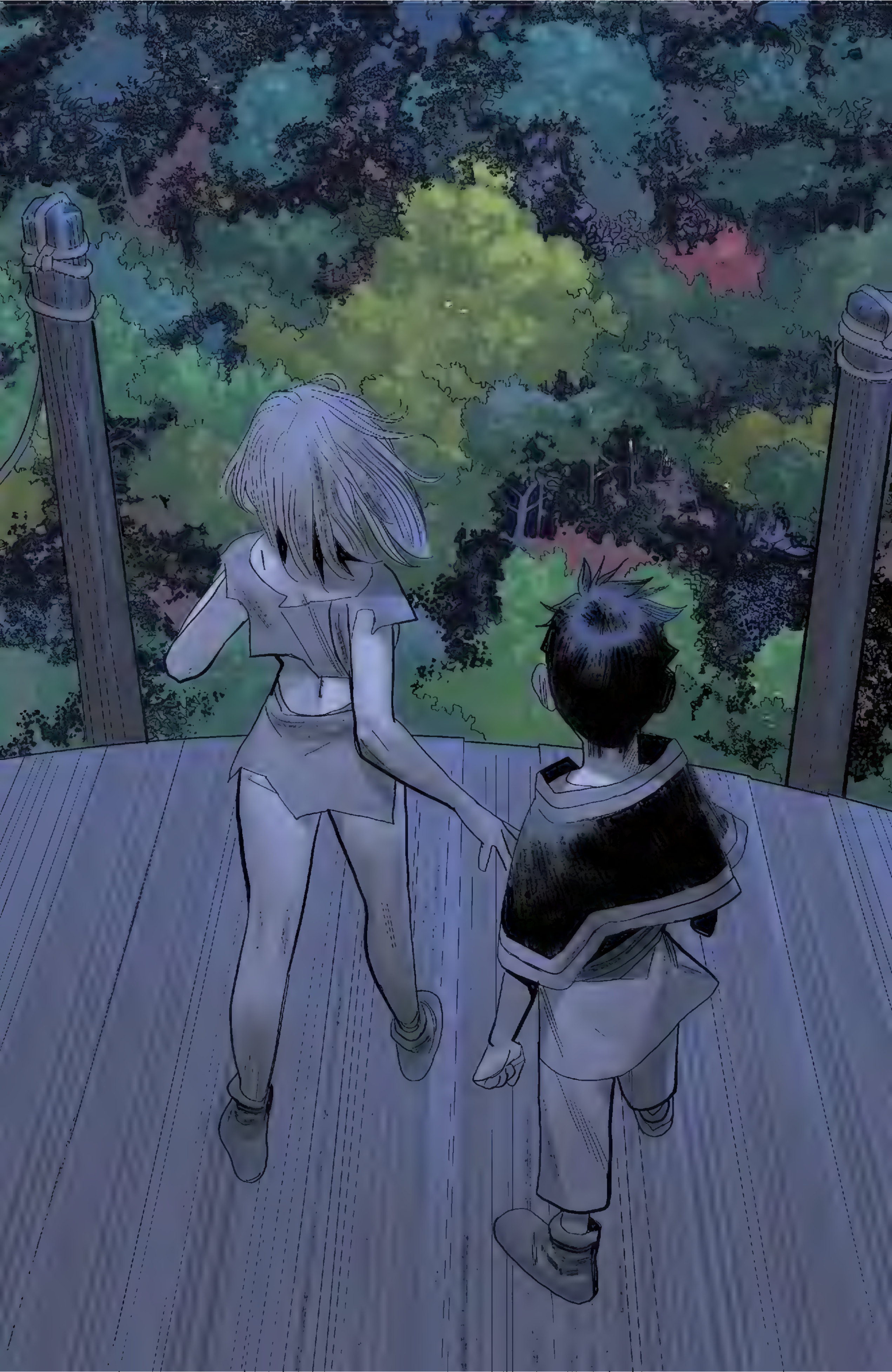

IT'S A DANGEROUS PATH.
W-WHAT, SIR?
YOUR DOUBTS. DAMOG TOLD ME WHAT YOU SAID TO YOUR FRIENDS DURING THE EXPEDITION.
LATELY, SOMETHING HAS SHIFTED INSIDE OF YOU. THE COLORS. YOU SAY THEY FEEL... HARMLESS? YOU DON'T FEEL AFRAID ANYMORE. YOU FEEL HURT.
YOU KNOW HOW MUCH DANGER HIDES IN THESE WORDS?
YES, SIR. I... I DON'T KNOW. I FEEL THE T-TRUTH IS SLIPPING THROUGH MY FINGERS LIKE A F-FISH SINCE THE DAY I SAW HER EYES.
HER EYES?

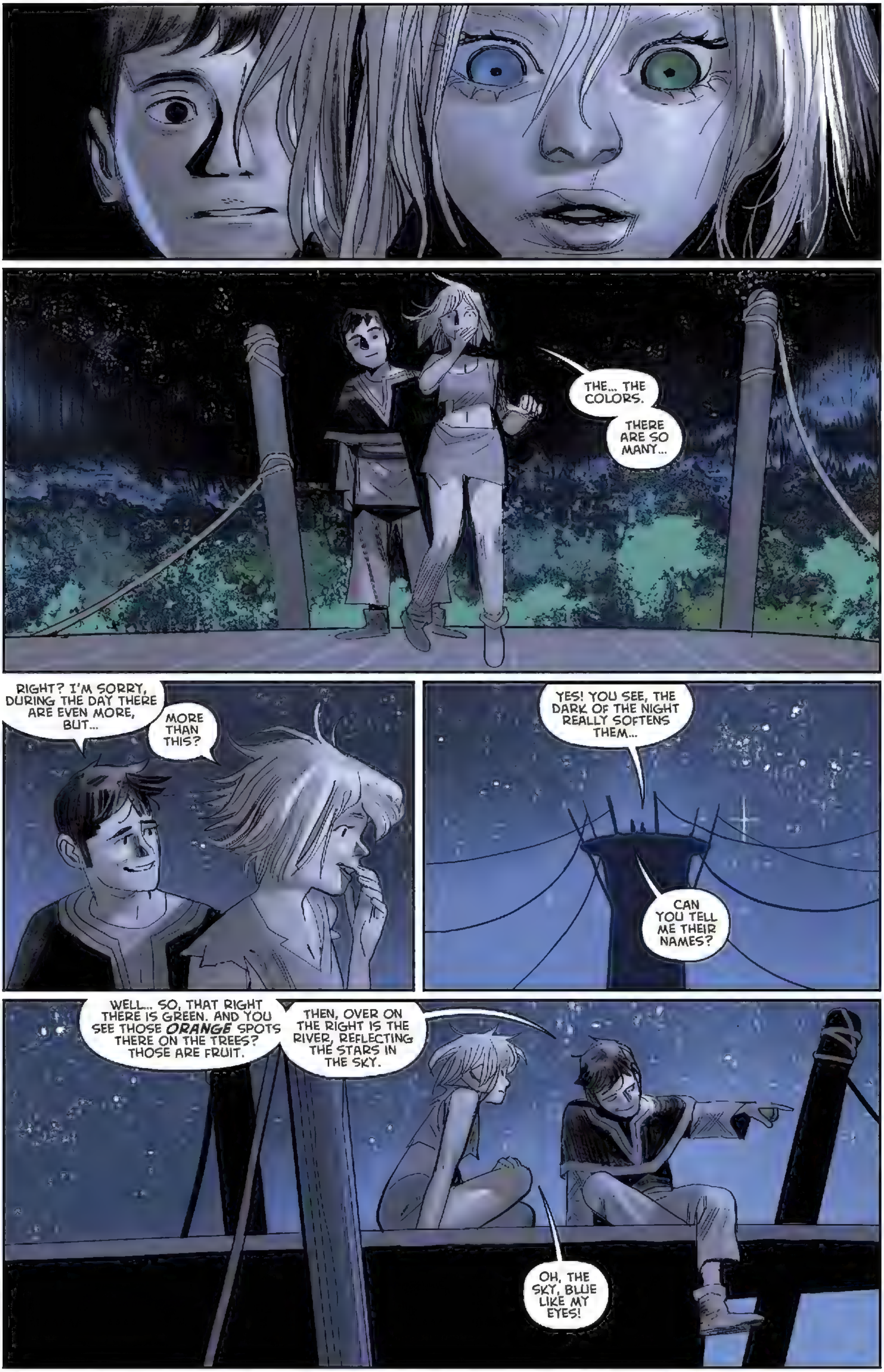

T-THAT DAY, I COULD SEE A BIT UNDER THE MASK AND I, *UH*... ***IT*** LOOKED LIKE A GIRL.
SHE... SHE LOOKED HURT AND WEAK.
IT! NOT SHE. WE CAPTURED ***IT*** BEFORE IT COULD HARM ANYONE, BUT... THE ***SHAPE*** THE MONSTER TOOK IS JUST A ***DECEPTION. THOSE EYES*** SHOULD BE PROOF ENOUGH OF HER NATURE, SHOULDN'T THEY?
ITS NATURE.
MMHH... MAYBE I WAS WRONG TO THINK YOU WERE ***SPECIAL***.
YES, MAYBE YOU ***ARE WRONG.***
...
PAY ATTENTION, YOUNG MAKKA. I CAN TAKE AWAY WAY MORE THAN YOUR PRIVILEGES.
NOW, LEAVE.
"THE FISH WILL KEEP SLIPPING IF YOU KEEP SQUEEZING.
"SO UNCLENCH YOUR FIST.
"AND SURRENDER TO THE TRUTH."

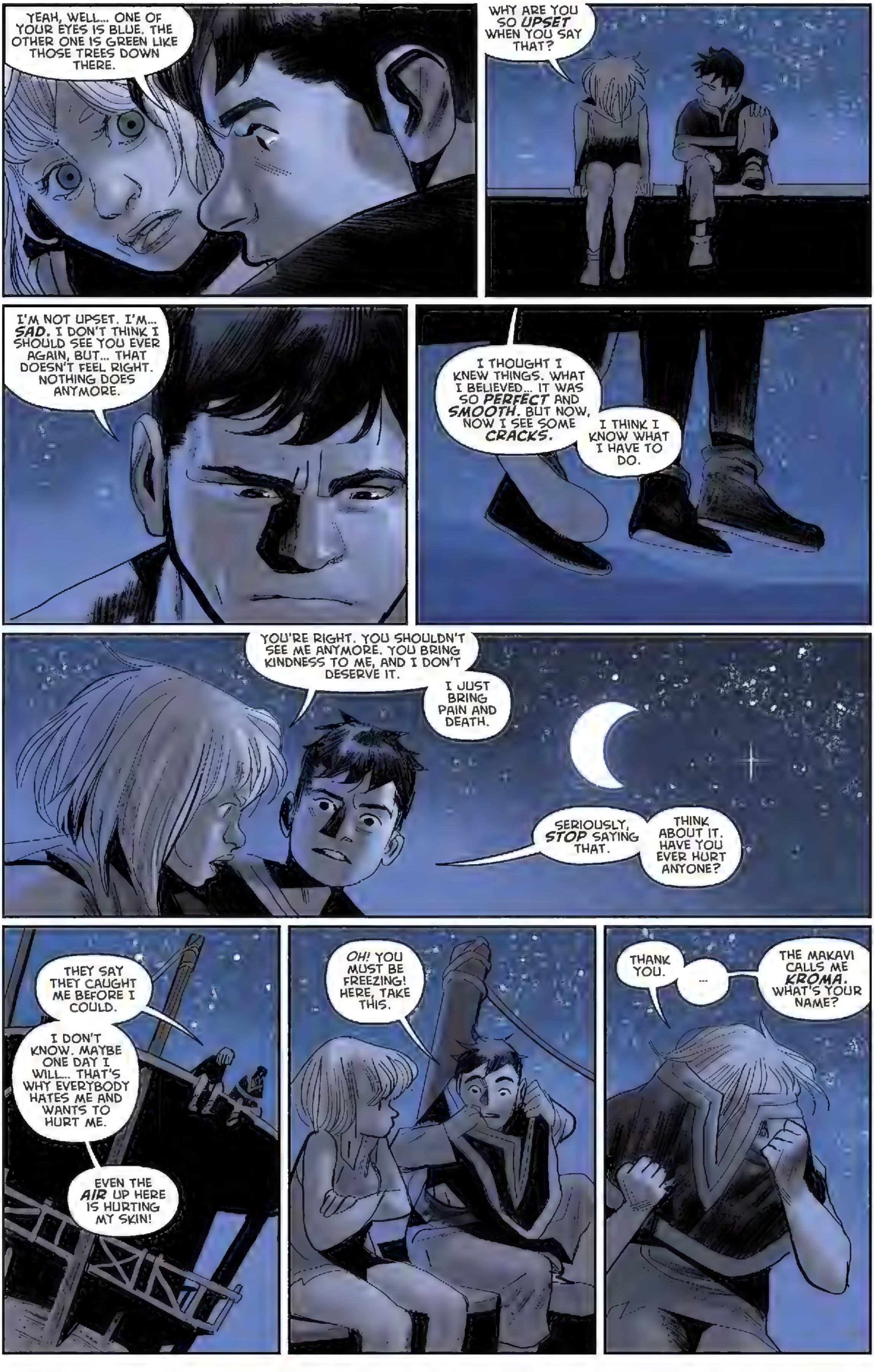

HEY, ZET, IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT? YOU DIDN'T EVEN EAT YOUR SOUP TONIGHT.
I'M NOT THAT HUNGRY. I'LL EAT IT IN THE MORNING. I CAN'T SLEEP OR EAT MUCH LATELY.
HEY ... THAT *CONCOCTION* THE CHEMIST GAVE YOU TO HELP YOU SLEEP, DO YOU HAPPEN TO HAVE ANY OF THAT LEFT?
Y-YES. HERE IT IS. JUST *ONE* DROP SHOULD HELP YOU SLEEP THE WHOLE NIGHT THROUGH.
THANK YOU!
HEY, ZET, LEAVE SOME FOR JUN. I HEARD THE SPIRIT OF THE HEADLESS LIZARD IS BACK IN OUR QUARTERS!
STOP SAYING THAT!
SOUP? WELL, I EXPECTED MORE THAN SOUP, YOUNG MAKKA.
AAH, BUT I PROMISE YOU, IT'S A *SPECIAL* SOUP.

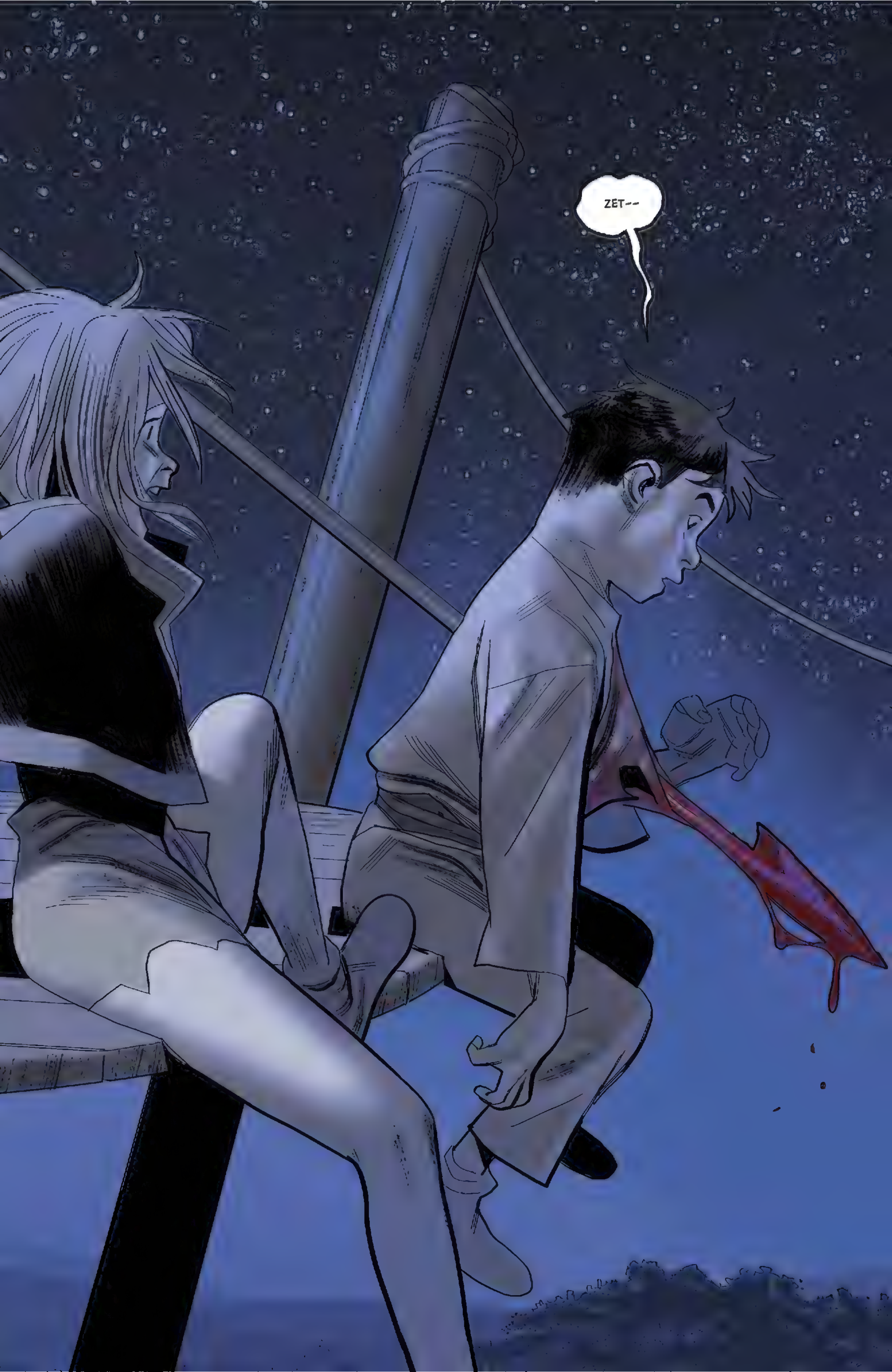

HELLO?
HEY.
YOU SOUND ANGRY.
I'M... I'M NOT ANGRY AT YOU. DON'T WORRY.
YOU DON'T WORRY ME. YOU'RE ALWAYS KIND TO ME.
I... JUST... CAN YOU PLEASE STAY STILL?
UHM... YES. WHY?
HEY... YOU'RE CLOSE.
CLAK!
WHAT DID YOU DO? CAN YOU PLEASE LIGHT THE WHITE FIRE AGAIN, LIKE LAST TIME?
WE WON'T NEED IT TODAY.


WHAT DID YOU DO?
I CAN'T ESCAPE! I WILL BRING ONLY *DEATH AND DESTRUCTION!*
STOP SAYING THOSE THINGS! I DON'T WANT YOU TO ESCAPE, JUST... ***FOLLOW ME.***
DON'T WORRY. HE'LL SLEEP FOR THE REST OF HIS SHIFT. MAYBE MORE.
UP HERE!



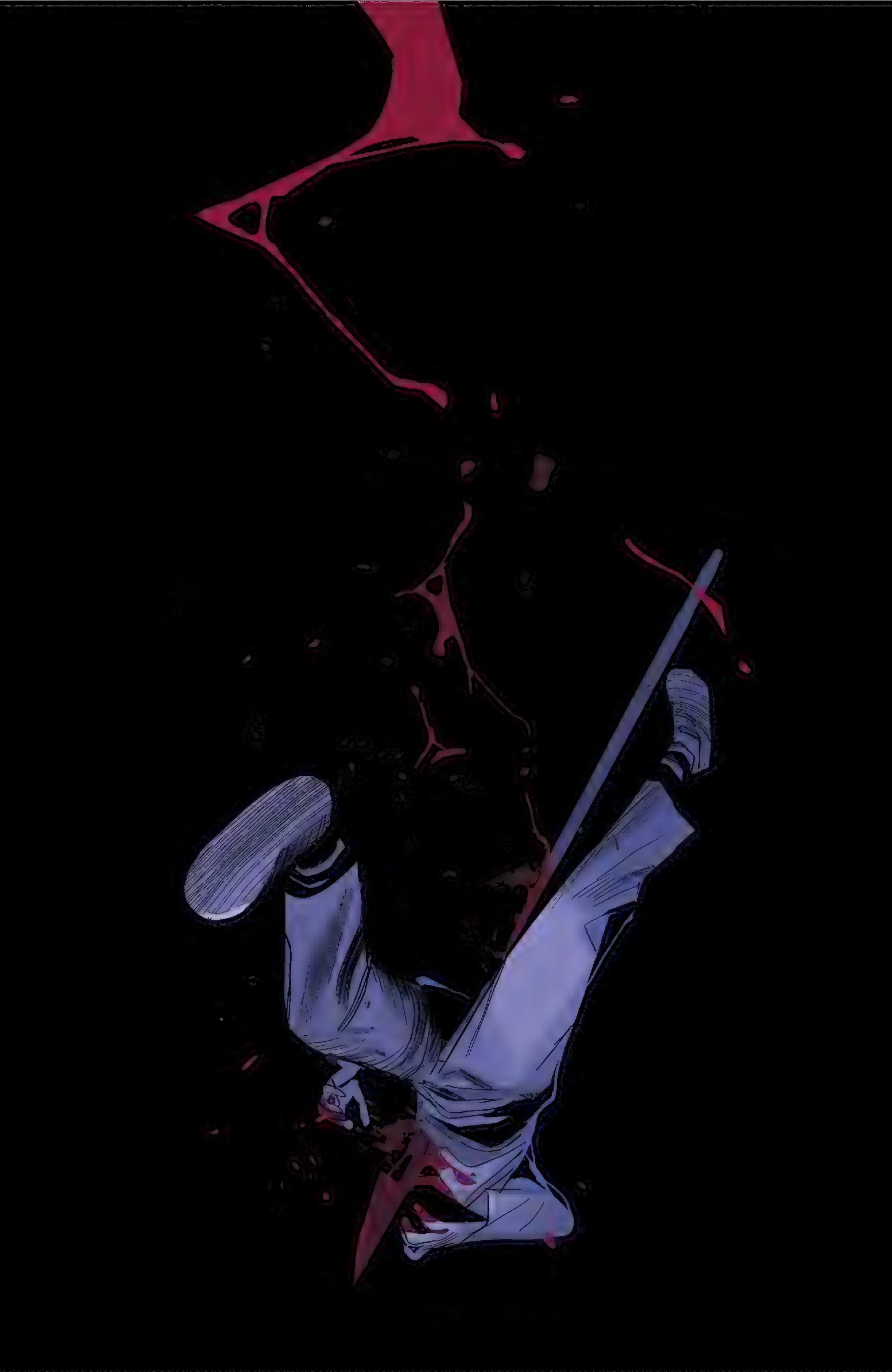

THE... THE COLORS.
THERE ARE SO MANY...
RIGHT? I'M SORRY, DURING THE DAY THERE ARE EVEN MORE, BUT...
MORE THAN THIS?
YES! YOU SEE, THE DARK OF THE NIGHT REALLY SOFTENS THEM...
CAN YOU TELL ME THEIR NAMES?
WELL... SO, THAT RIGHT THERE IS GREEN. AND YOU SEE THOSE *ORANGE* SPOTS THERE ON THE TREES? THOSE ARE FRUIT.
THEN, OVER ON THE RIGHT IS THE RIVER, REFLECTING THE STARS IN THE SKY.
OH, THE SKY, BLUE LIKE MY EYES!

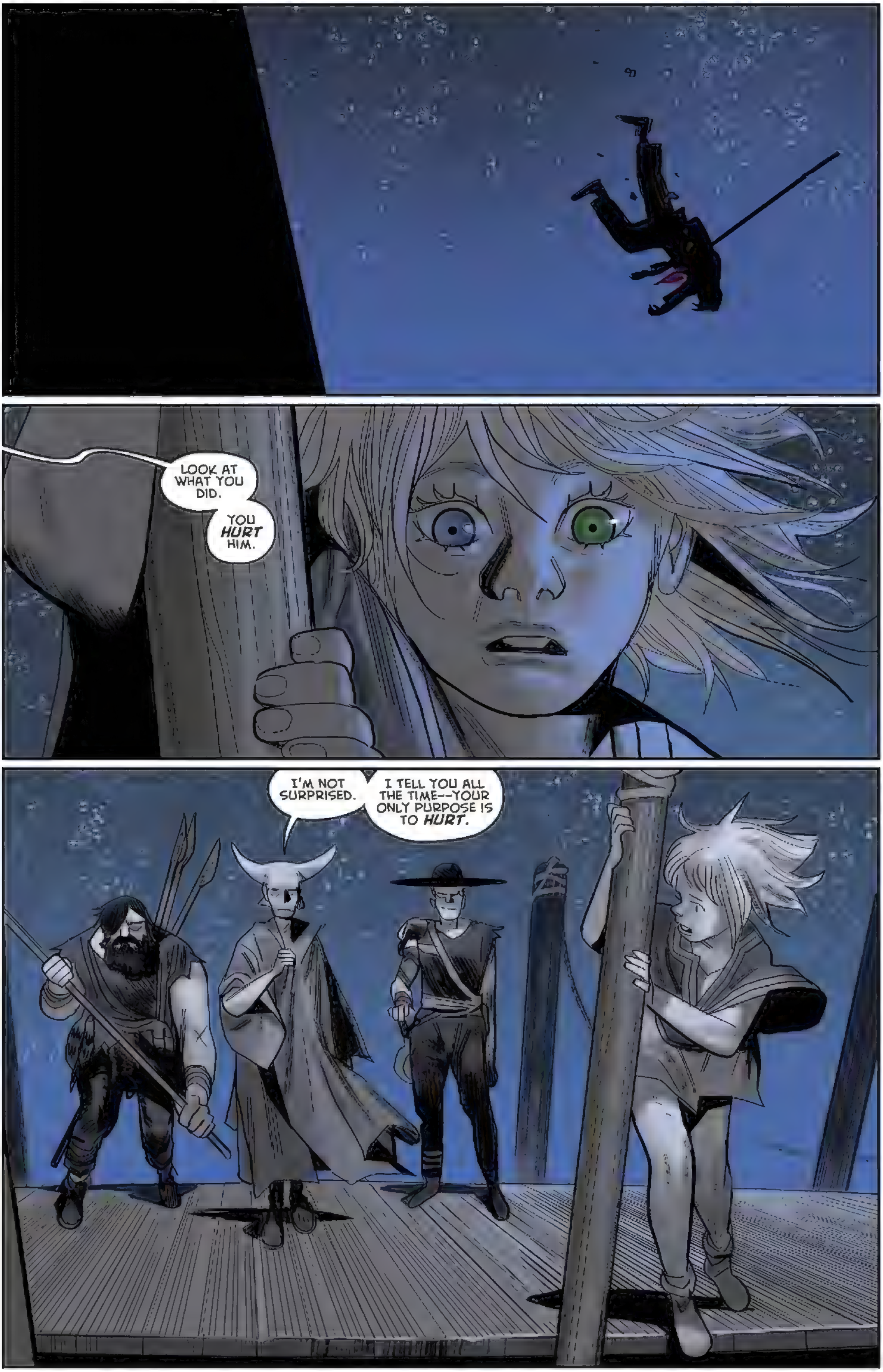

YEAH, WELL... ONE OF YOUR EYES IS BLUE. THE OTHER ONE IS GREEN LIKE THOSE TREES DOWN THERE.
WHY ARE YOU SO *UPSET* WHEN YOU SAY THAT?
I'M NOT UPSET. I'M... ***SAD.*** I DON'T THINK I SHOULD SEE YOU EVER AGAIN, BUT... THAT DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT. NOTHING DOES ANYMORE.
I THOUGHT I KNEW THINGS. WHAT I BELIEVED... IT WAS SO ***PERFECT*** AND ***SMOOTH.*** BUT NOW, NOW I SEE SOME ***CRACKS.***
I THINK I KNOW WHAT I HAVE TO DO.
YOU'RE RIGHT. YOU SHOULDN'T SEE ME ANYMORE. YOU BRING KINDNESS TO ME, AND I DON'T DESERVE IT.
I JUST BRING PAIN AND DEATH.
SERIOUSLY, ***STOP*** SAYING THAT.
THINK ABOUT IT. HAVE YOU EVER HURT ANYONE?
THEY SAY THEY CAUGHT ME BEFORE I COULD.
I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE ONE DAY I WILL... THAT'S WHY EVERYBODY HATES ME AND WANTS TO HURT ME.
EVEN THE ***AIR*** UP HERE IS HURTING MY SKIN!
OH! YOU MUST BE FREEZING! HERE, TAKE THIS.
THANK YOU.
...
THE MAKAVI CALLS ME ***KROMA.*** WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

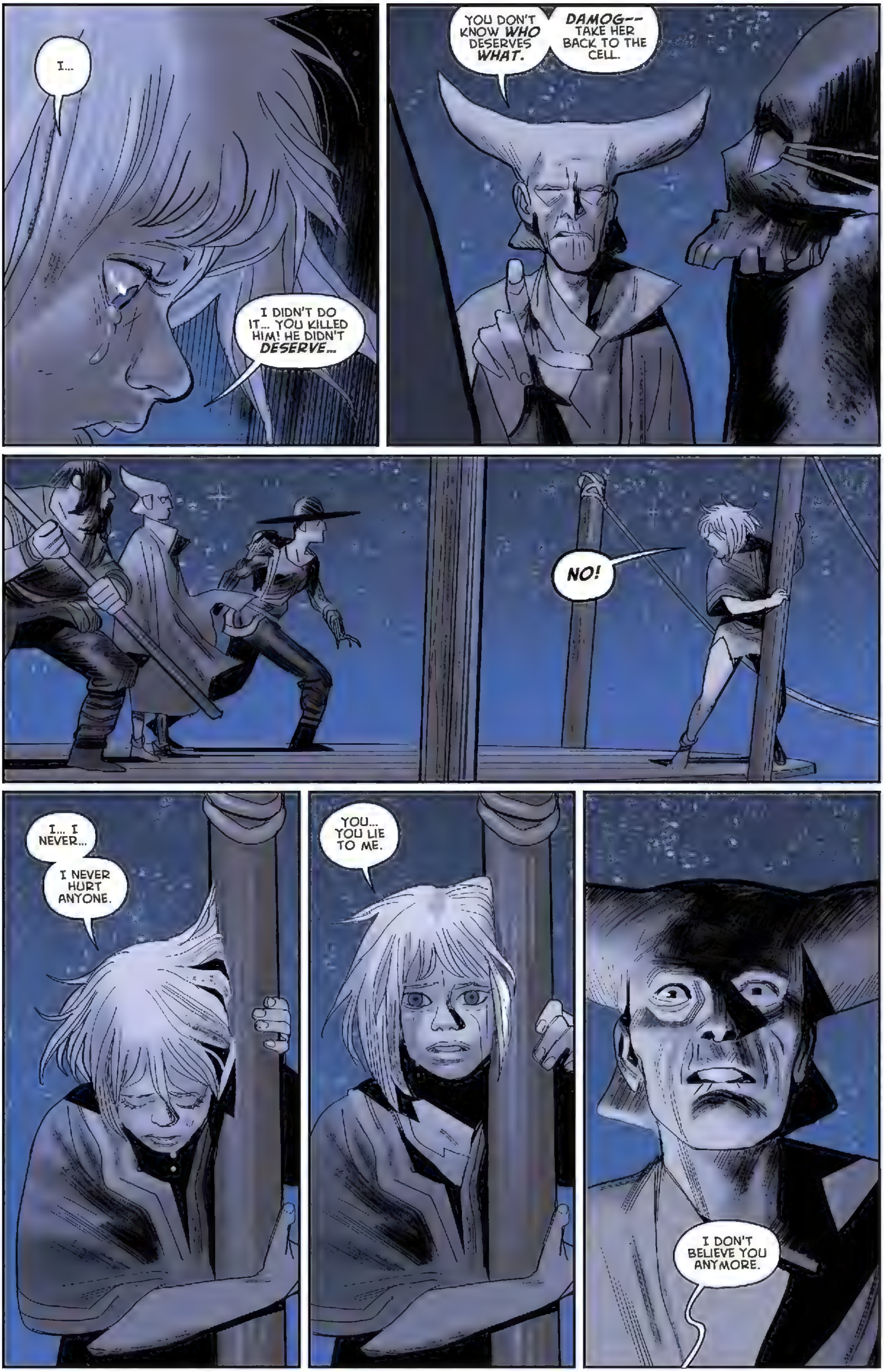

ZET--

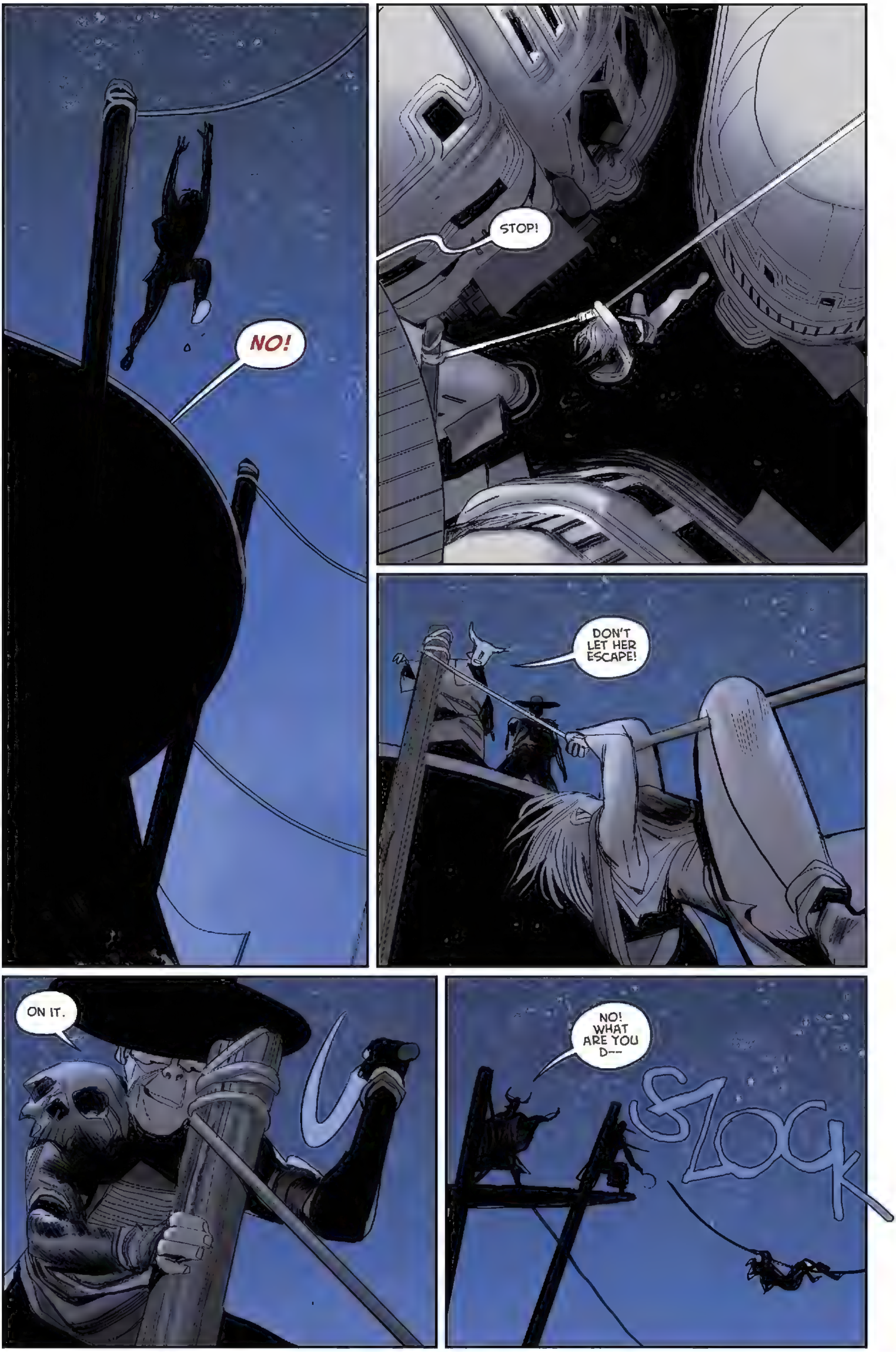
CHAPTER

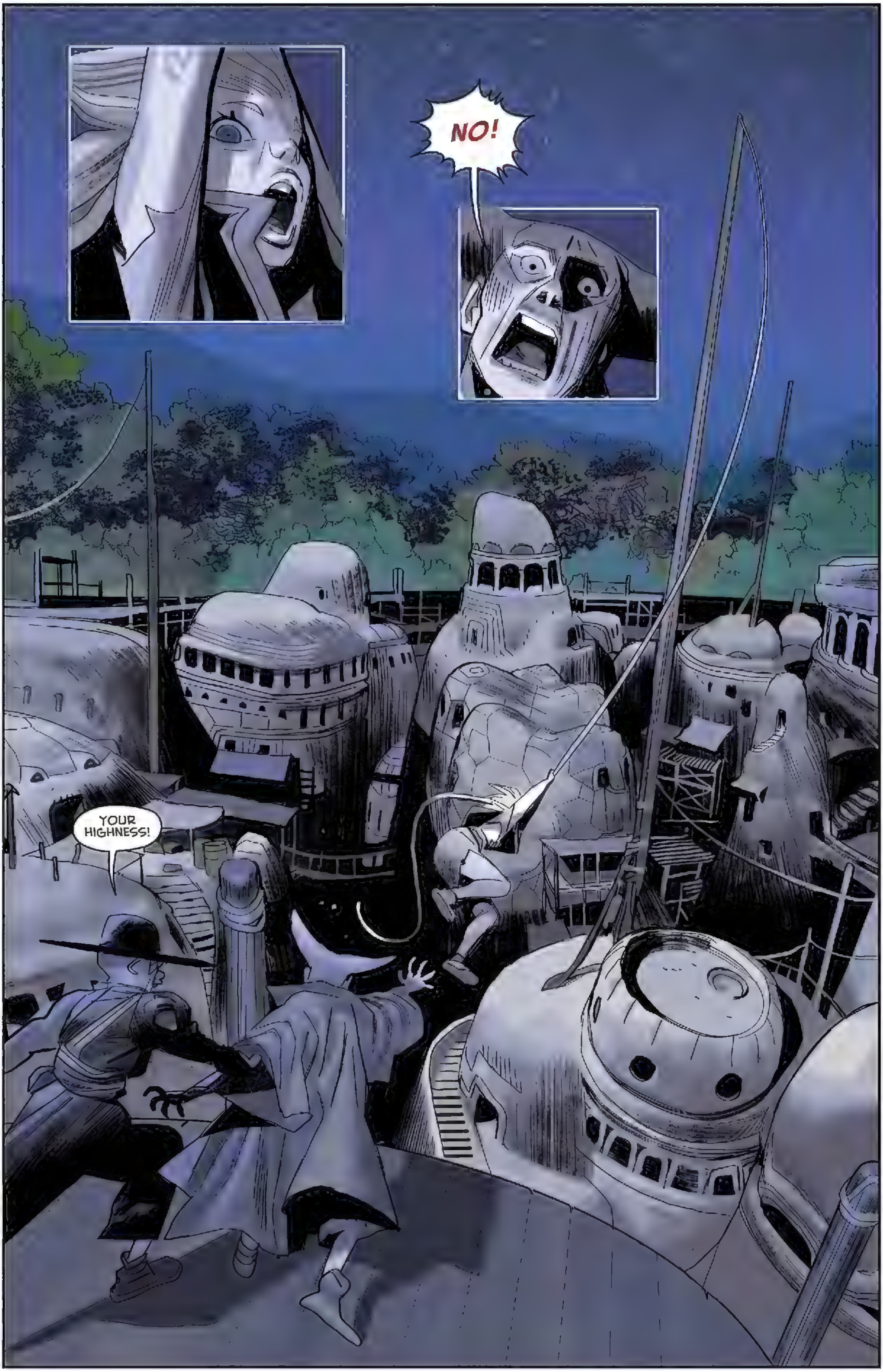
TWO

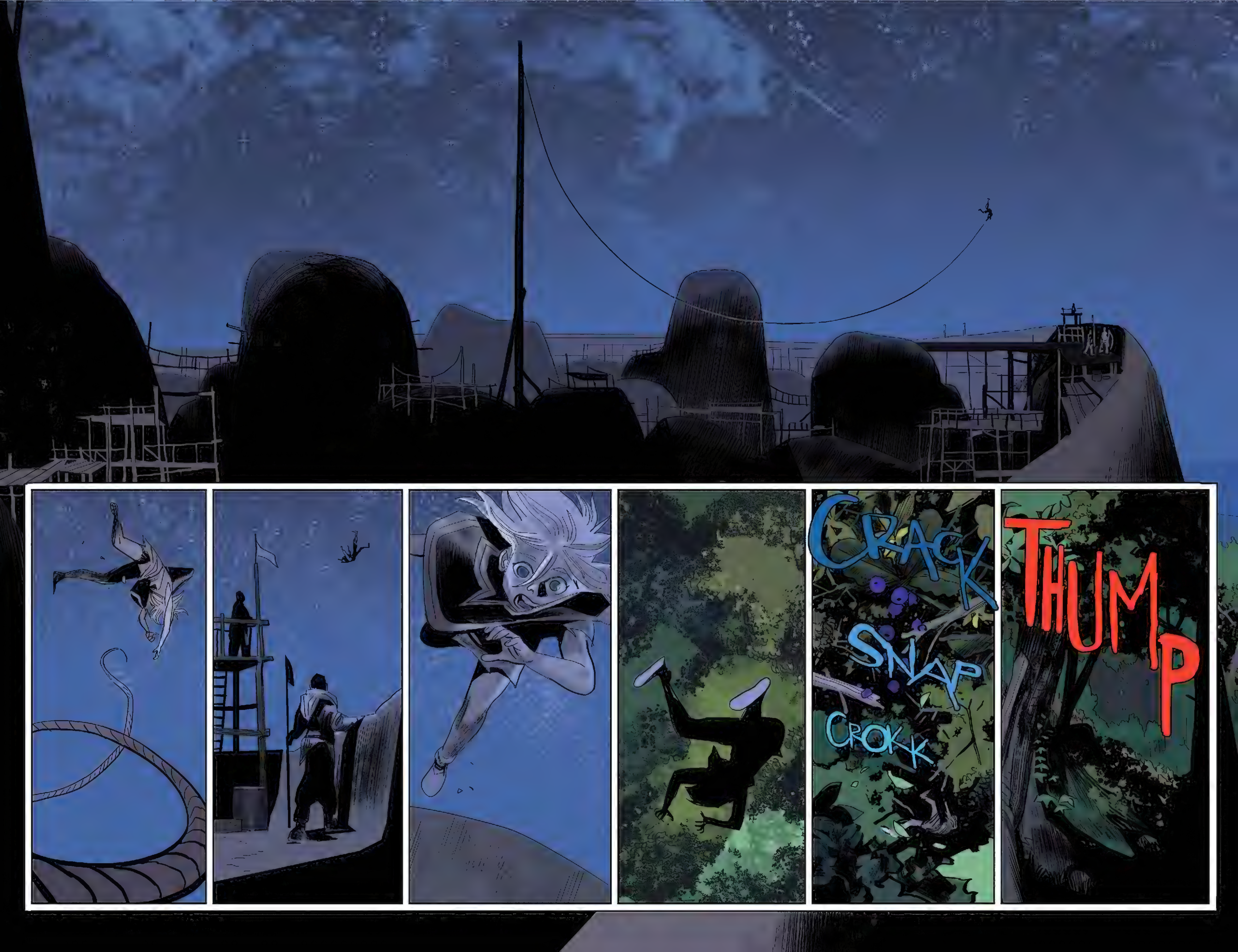


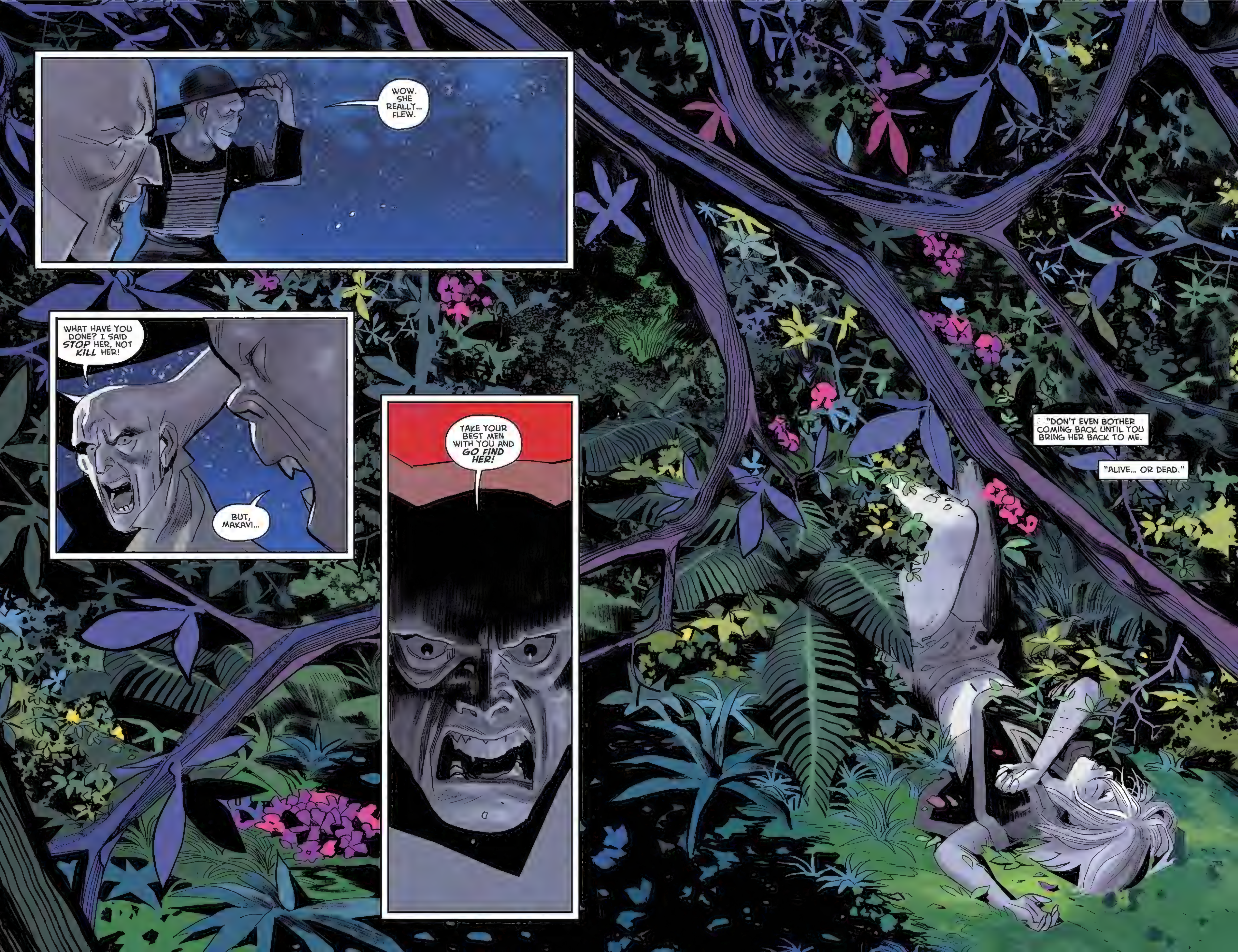

LOOK AT WHAT YOU DID.
YOU *HURT* HIM.
I'M NOT SURPRISED.
I TELL YOU ALL THE TIME--YOUR ONLY PURPOSE IS TO *HURT*.

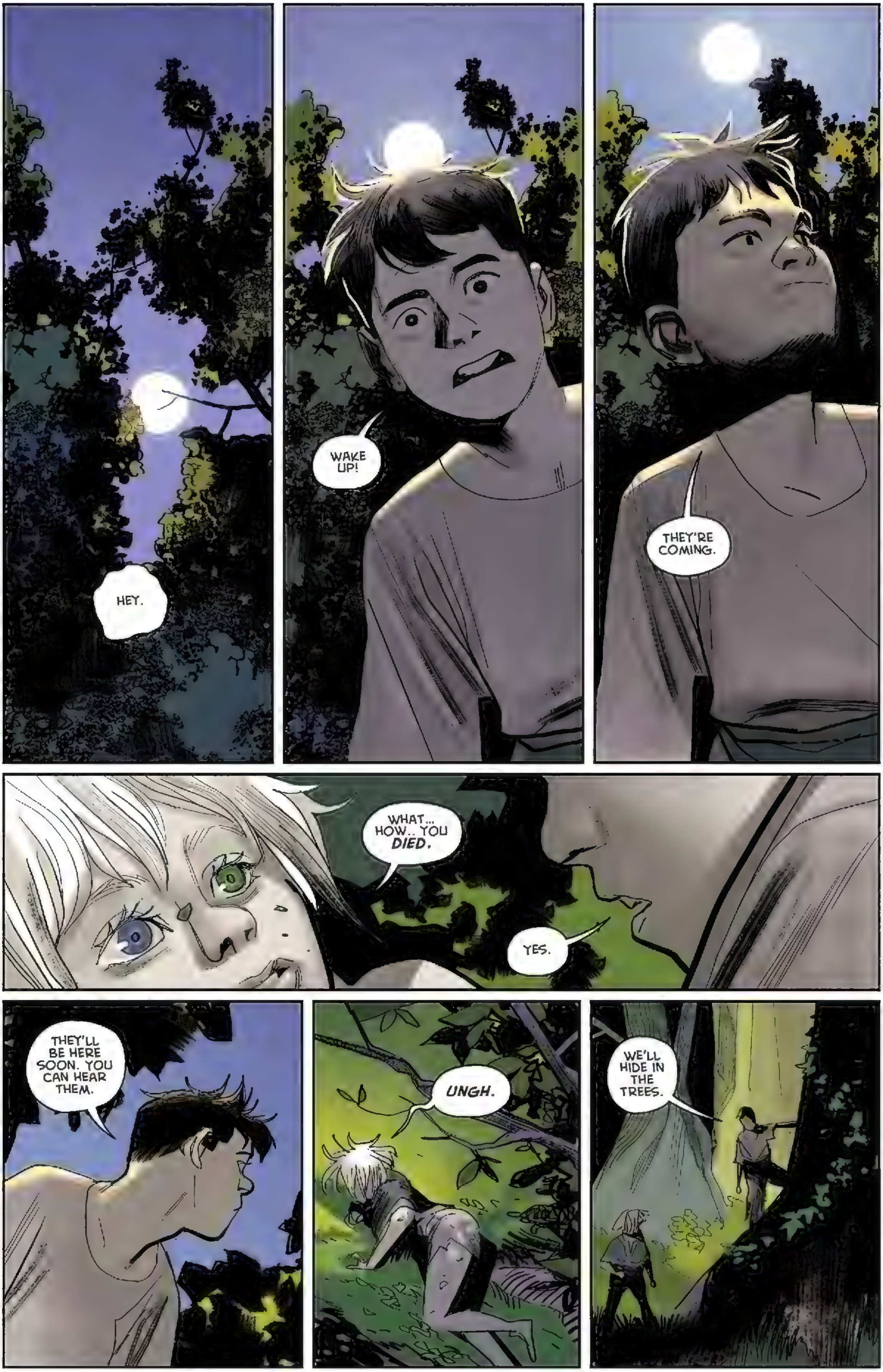

I...
I DIDN'T DO IT... YOU KILLED HIM! HE DIDN'T *DESERVE...*
YOU DON'T KNOW *WHO* DESERVES *WHAT.*
DAMOG-- TAKE HER BACK TO THE CELL.
NO!
I... I NEVER...
I NEVER HURT ANYONE.
YOU... YOU LIE TO ME.
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU ANYMORE.

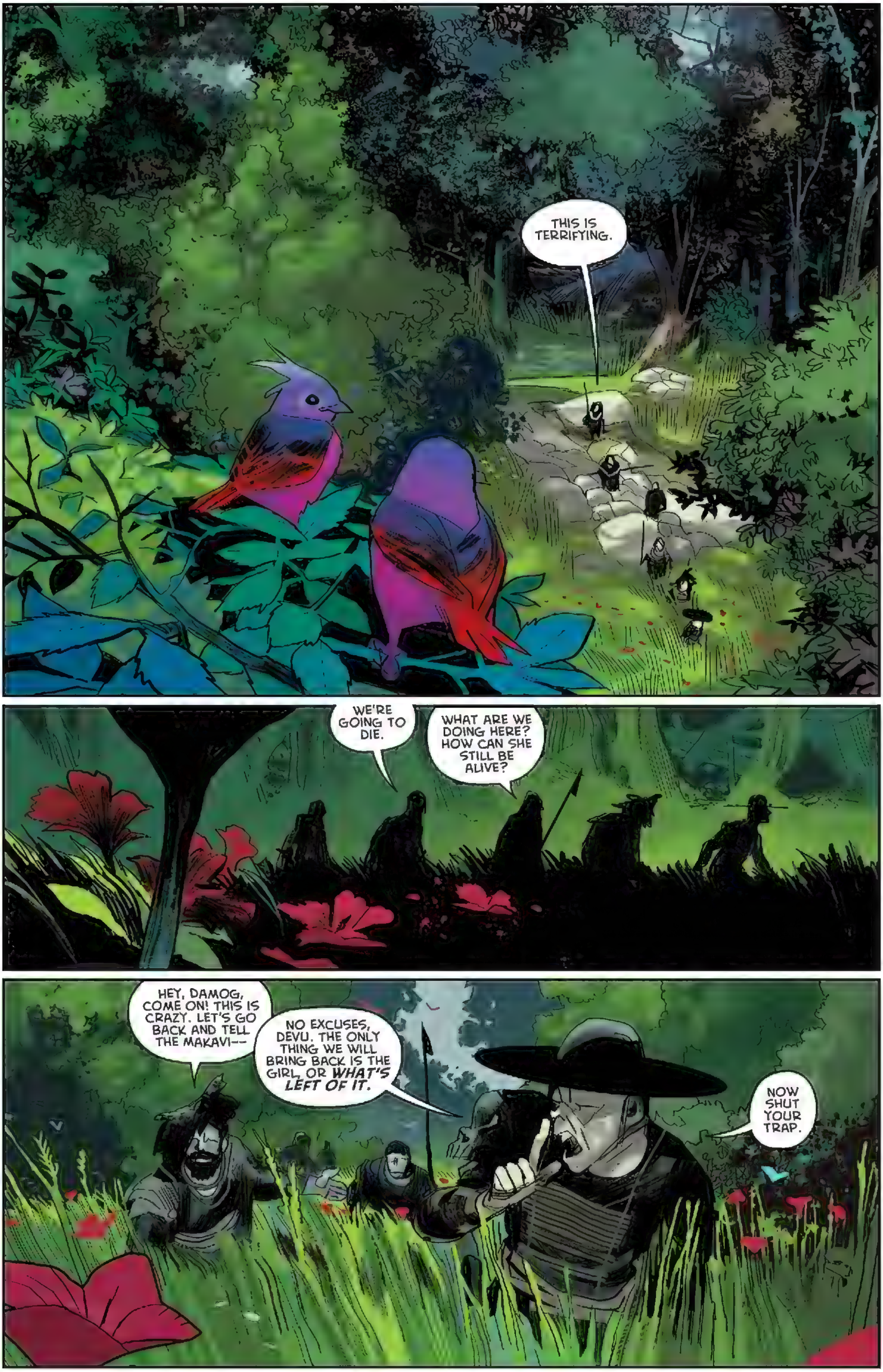

NO!
STOP!
DON'T LET HER ESCAPE!
ON IT.
NO! WHAT ARE YOU D--
SZOCK

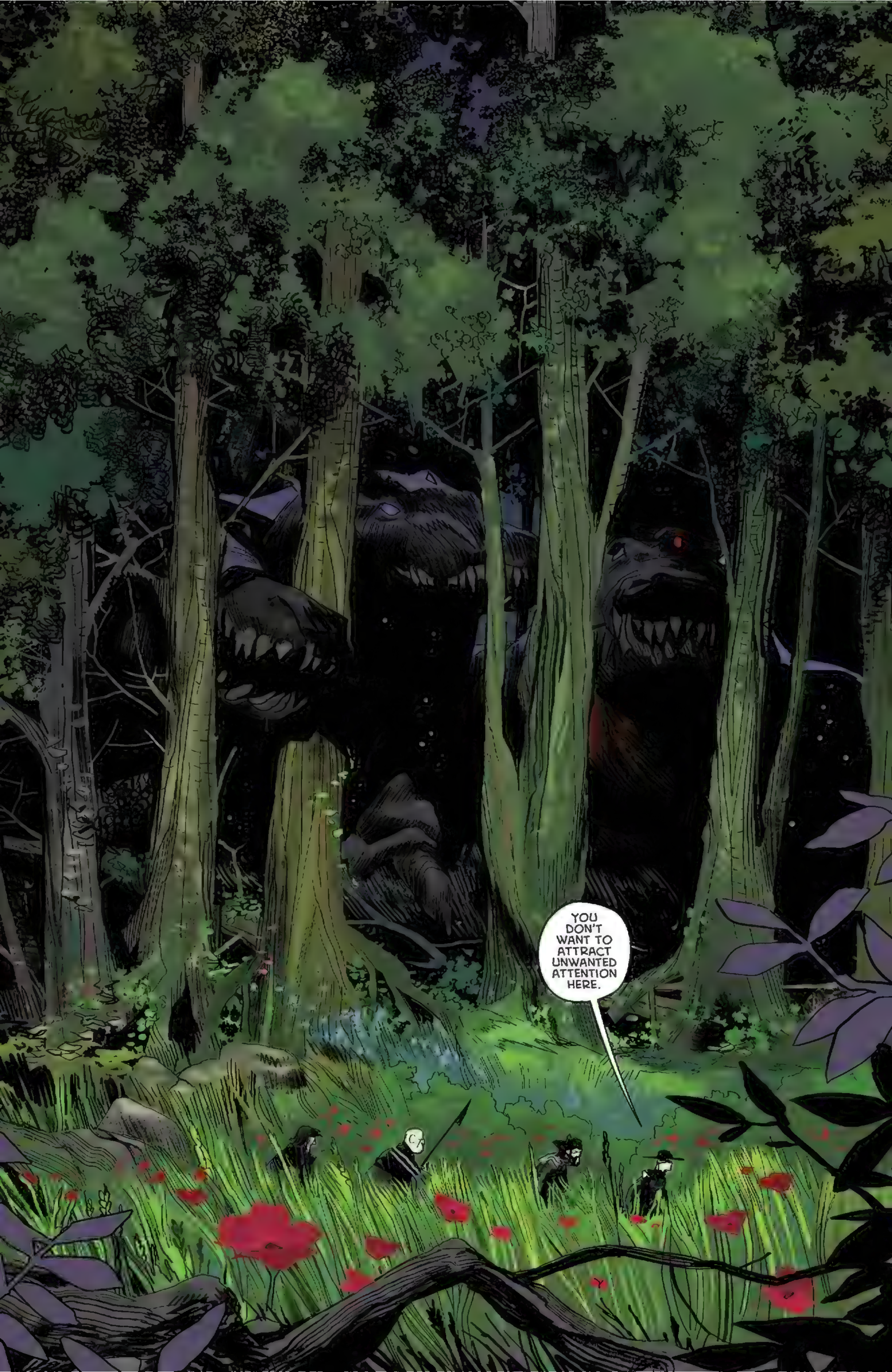

NO!
YOUR HIGHNESS!

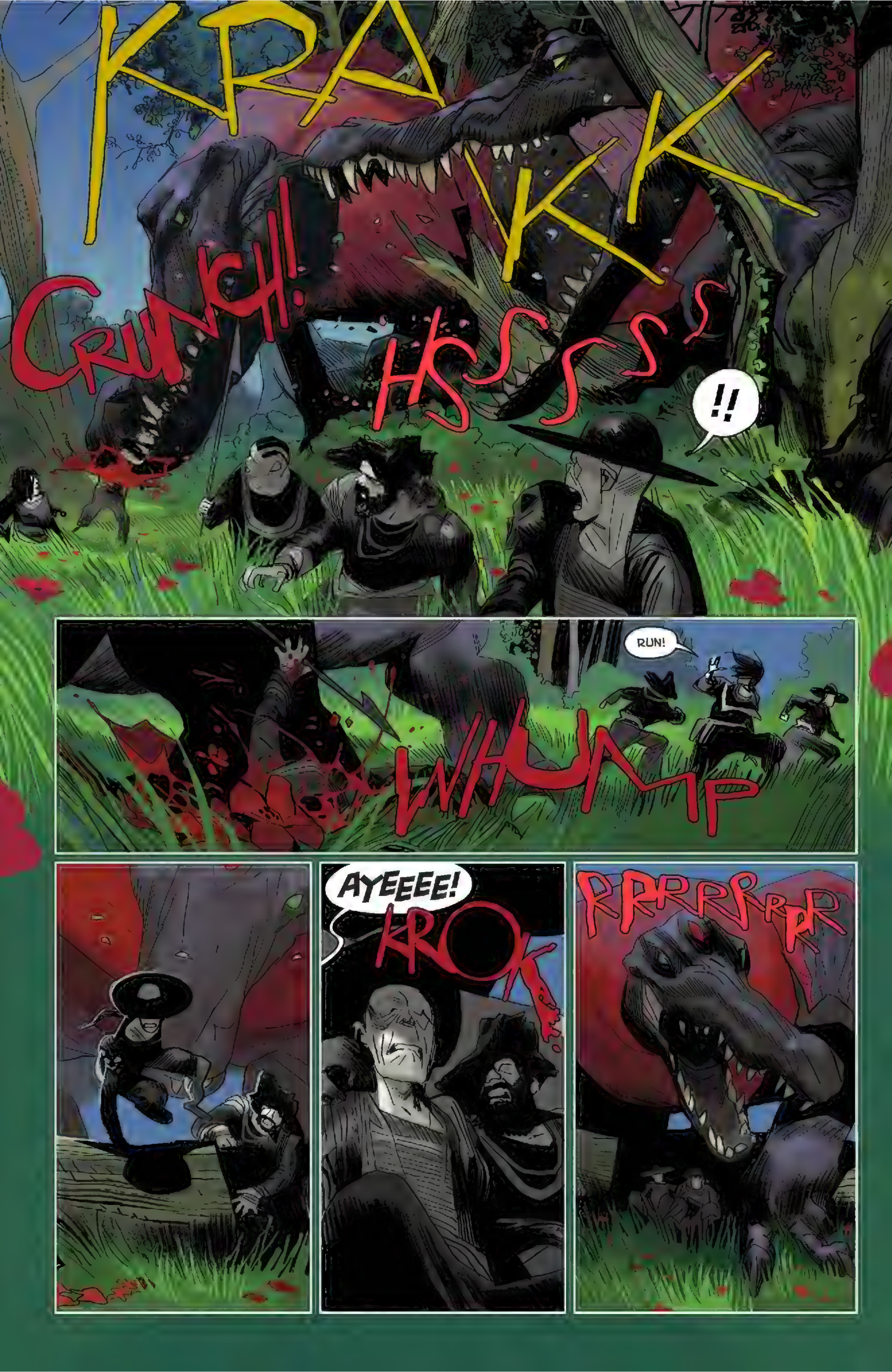

CRACK
SNAP
CROKK
THUMP

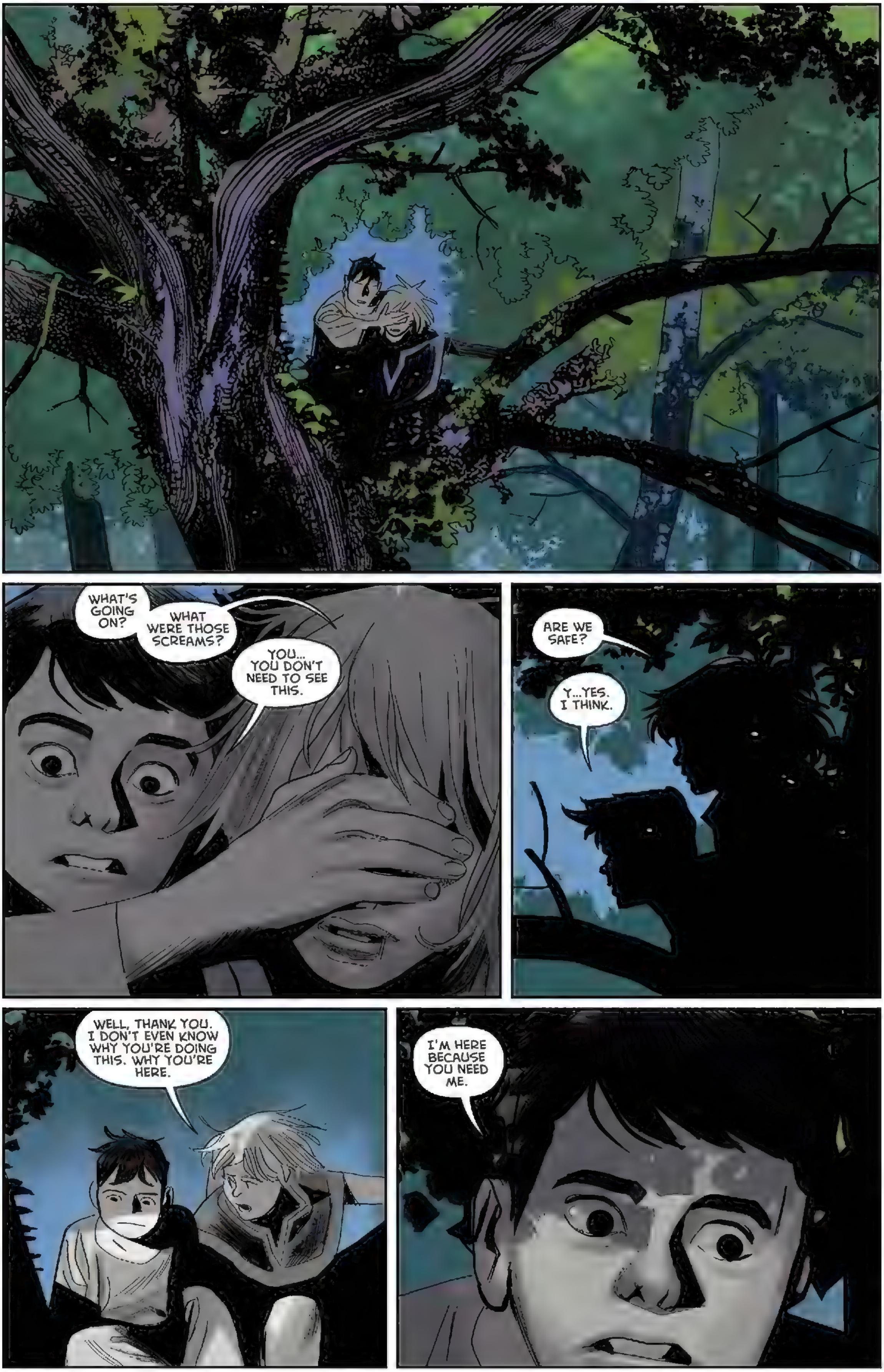

WOW. SHE REALLY... FLEW.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? I SAID *STOP* HER, NOT *KILL* HER!
BUT, MAKAVI...
TAKE YOUR BEST MEN WITH YOU AND *GO FIND HER!*
"DON'T EVEN BOTHER COMING BACK UNTIL YOU BRING HER BACK TO ME.
"ALIVE... OR DEAD."

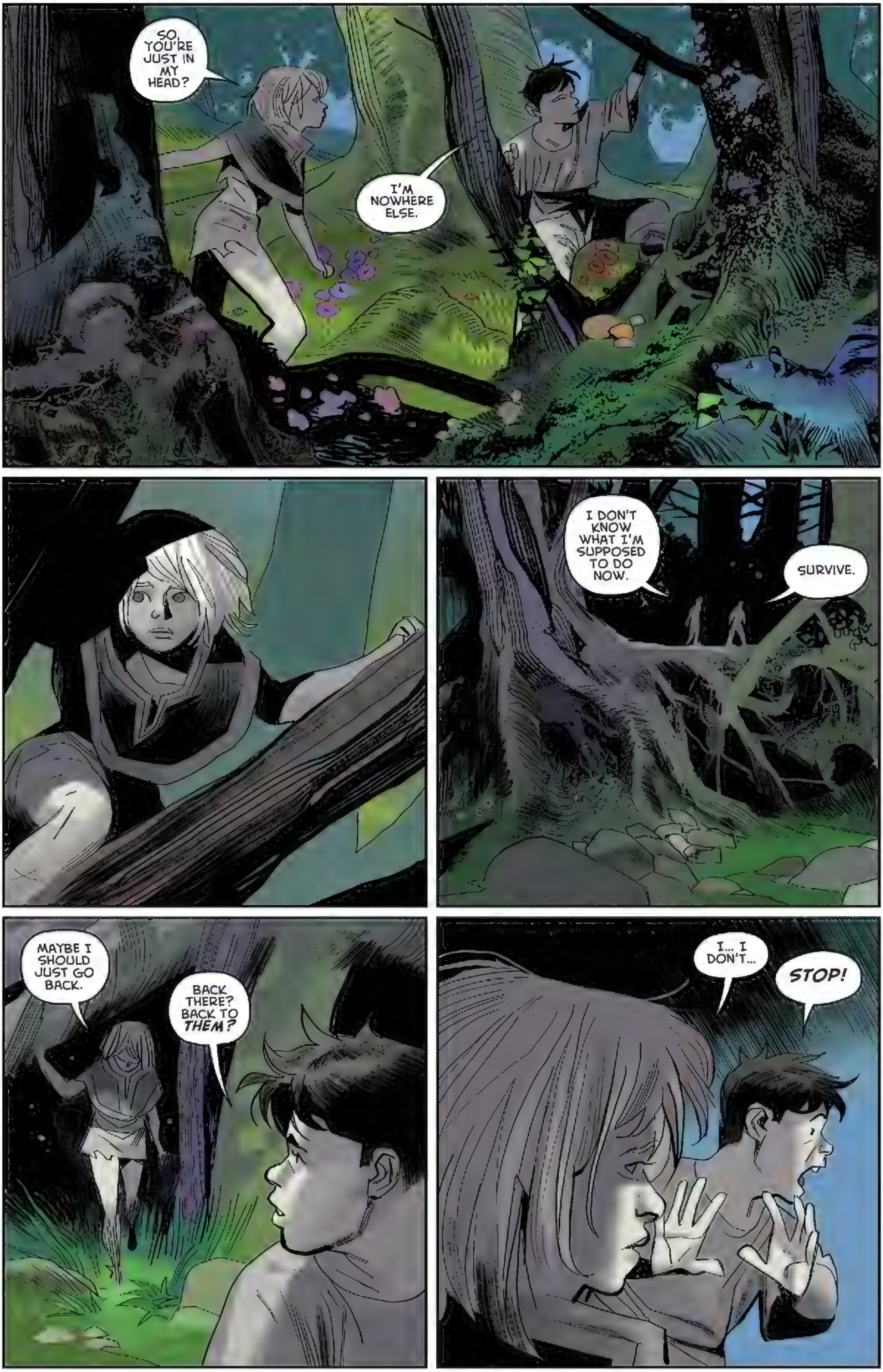

HEY.
WAKE UP!
THEY'RE COMING.
WHAT... HOW.. YOU ***DIED.***
YES.
THEY'LL BE HERE SOON. YOU CAN HEAR THEM.
UNGH.
WE'LL HIDE IN THE TREES.

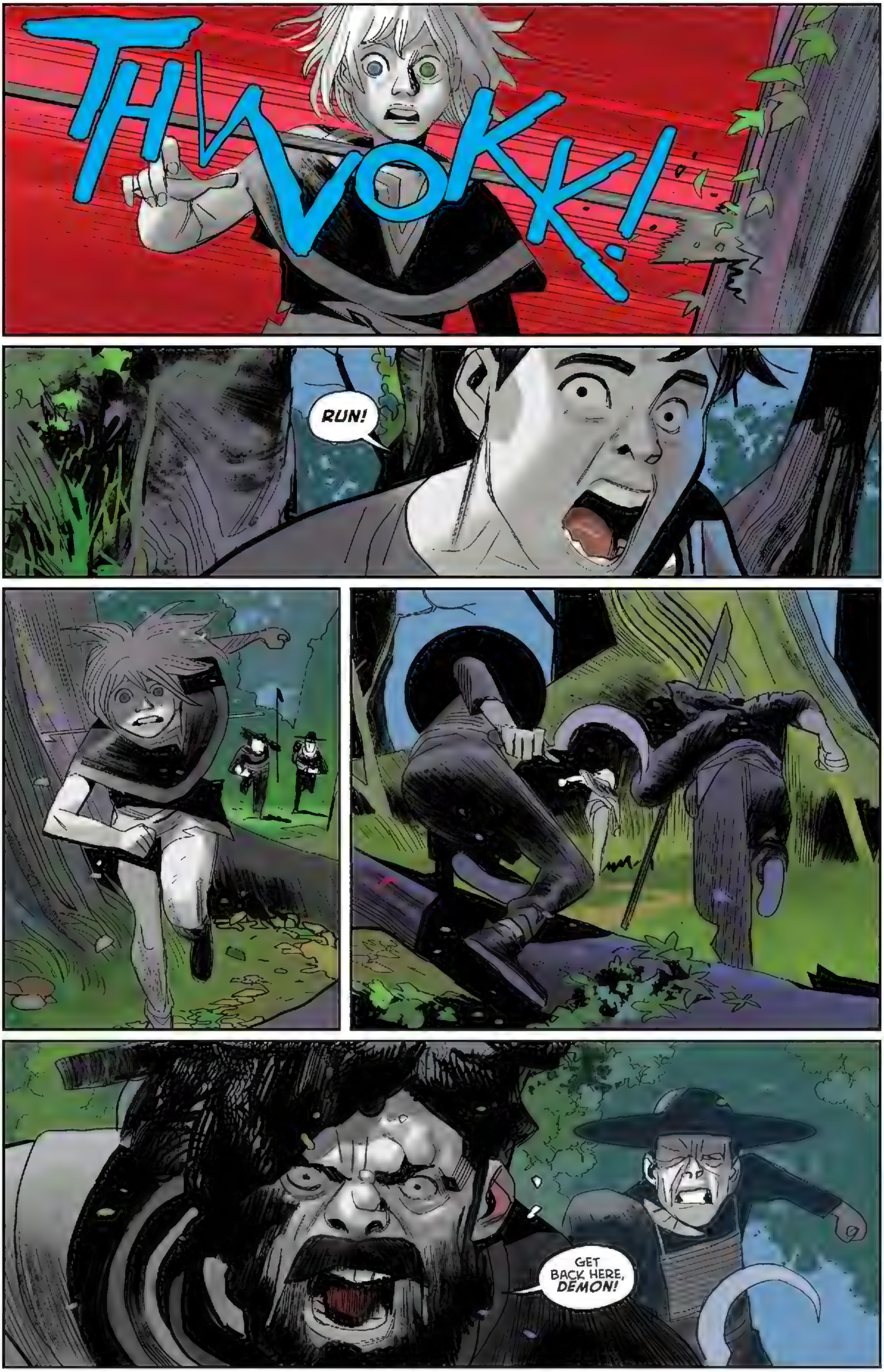

THIS IS TERRIFYING.
WE'RE GOING TO DIE.
WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE? HOW CAN SHE STILL BE ALIVE?
HEY, DAMOG, COME ON! THIS IS CRAZY. LET'S GO BACK AND TELL THE MAKAVI--
NO EXCUSES, DEVU. THE ONLY THING WE WILL BRING BACK IS THE GIRL, OR *WHAT'S LEFT OF IT.*
NOW SHUT YOUR TRAP.

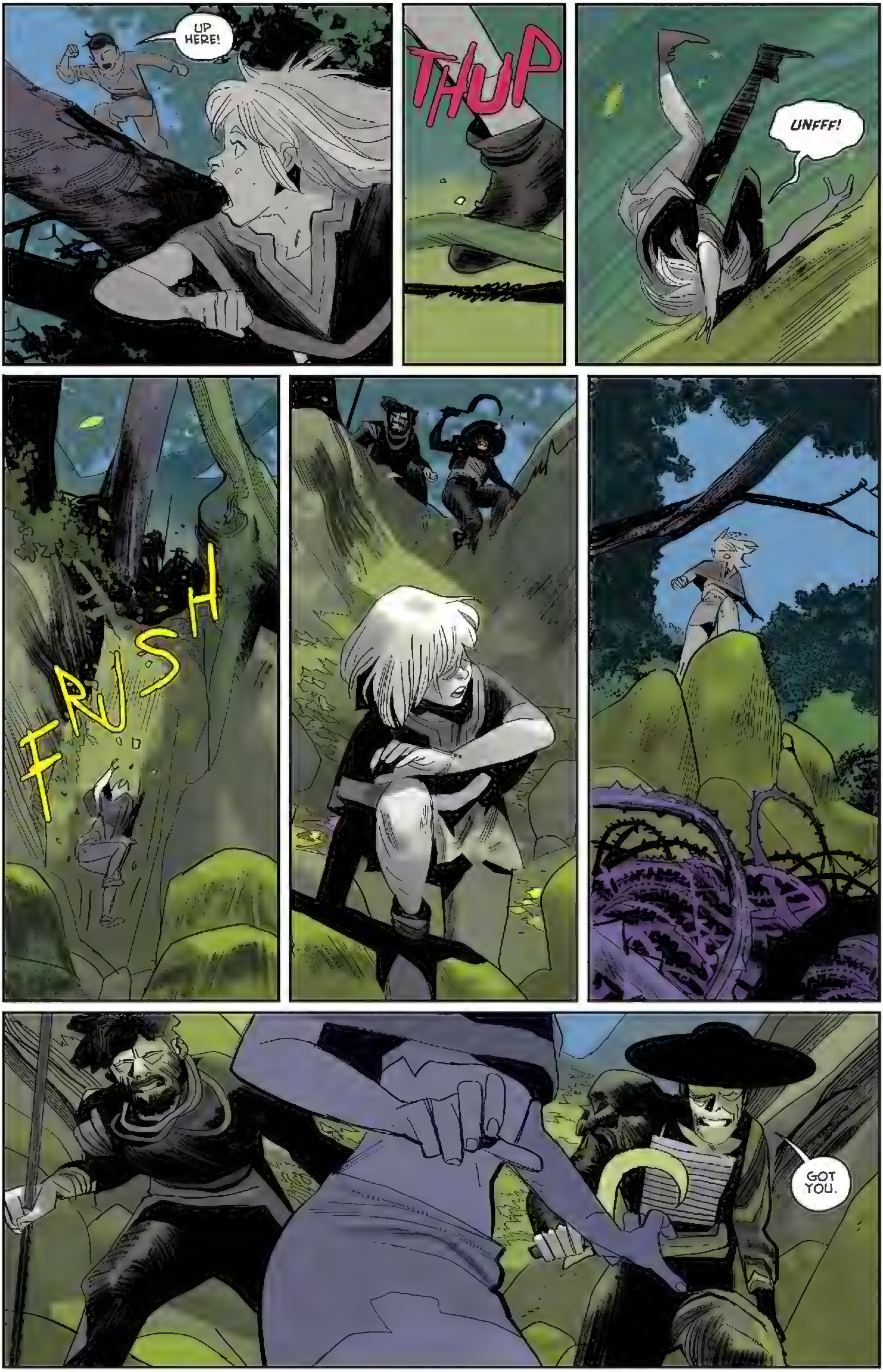

YOU DON'T WANT TO ATTRACT UNWANTED ATTENTION HERE.

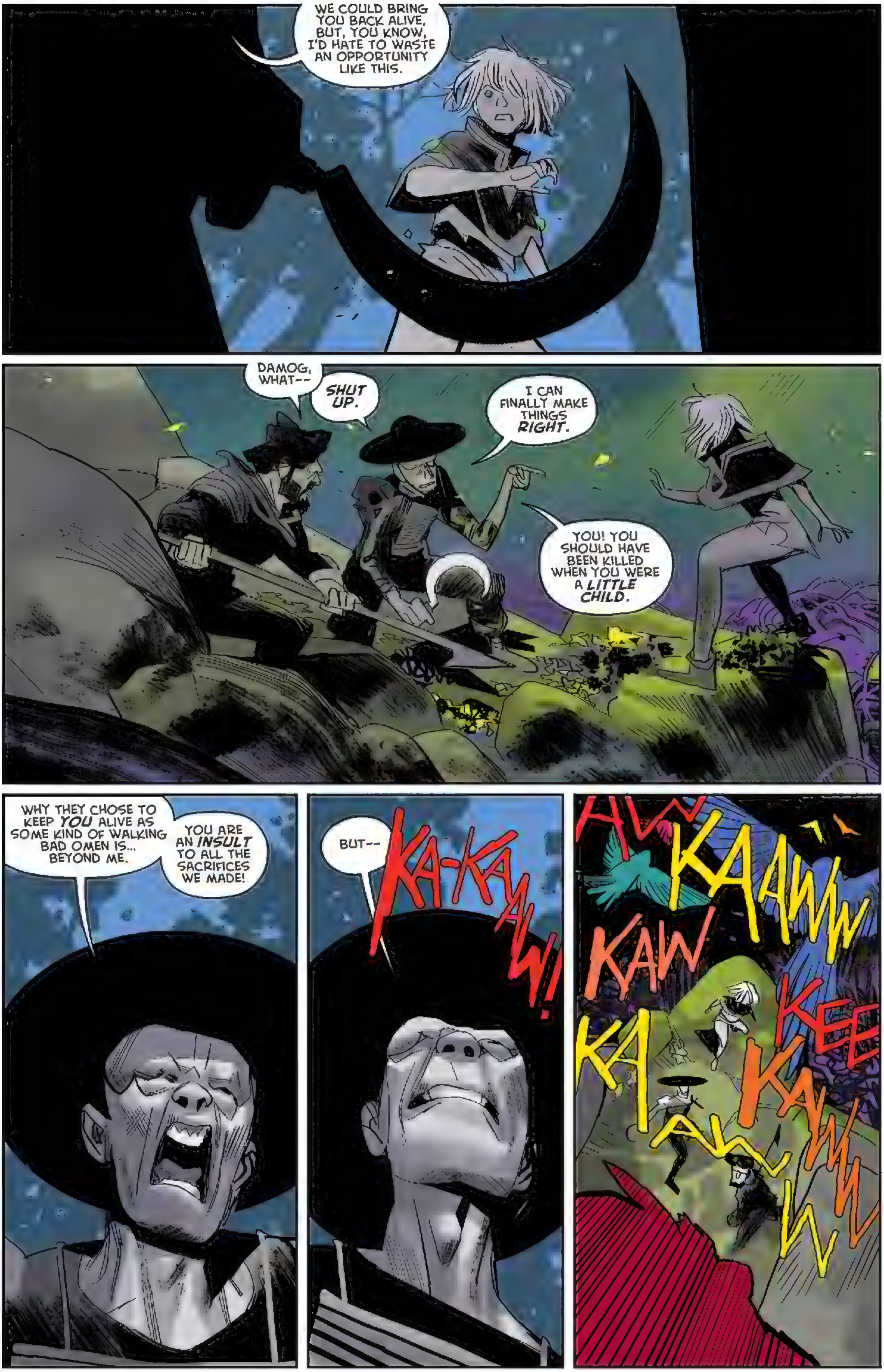

KRAKK
CRUNCH!
HSSSSS
!!
RUN!
WHUMP
AYEEEE!
KROK
RRRRRRRR

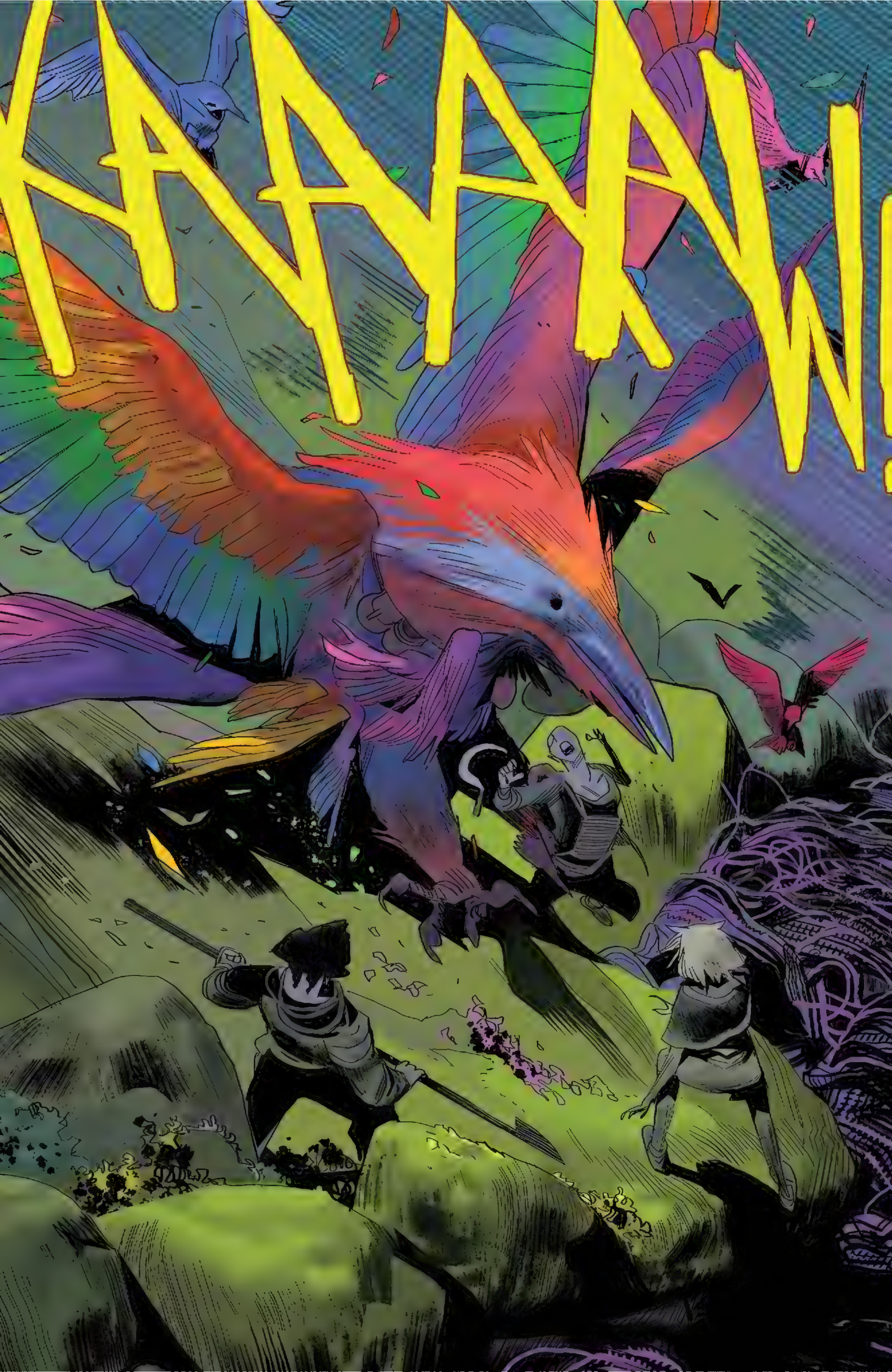

WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT WERE THOSE SCREAMS?
YOU... YOU DON'T NEED TO SEE THIS.
ARE WE SAFE?
Y...YES. I THINK.
WELL, THANK YOU. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHY YOU'RE DOING THIS. WHY YOU'RE HERE.
I'M HERE BECAUSE YOU NEED ME.

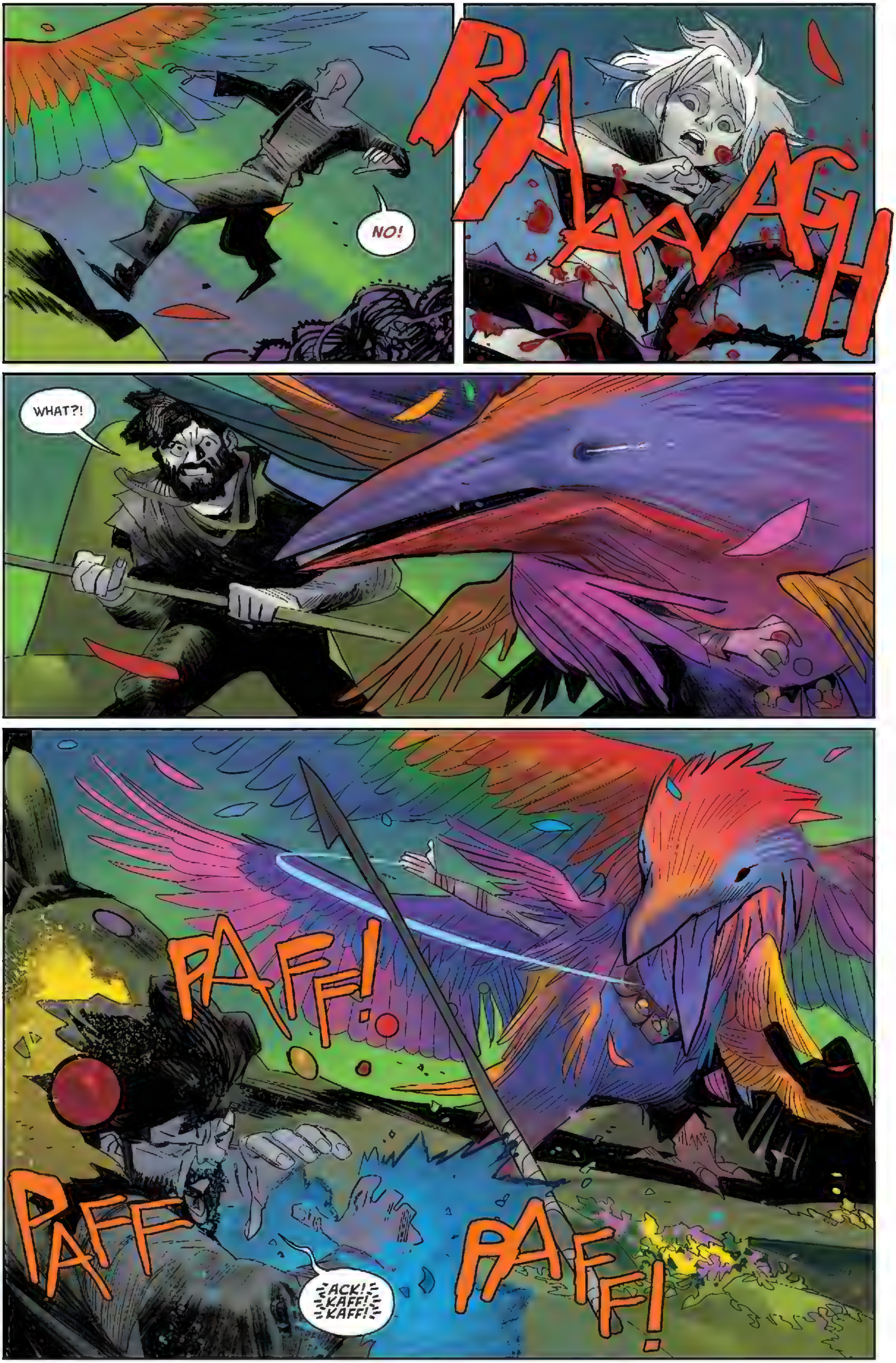

SO, YOU'RE JUST IN MY HEAD?
I'M NOWHERE ELSE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO DO NOW.
SURVIVE.
MAYBE I SHOULD JUST GO BACK.
BACK THERE? BACK TO *THEM?*
I... I DON'T...
STOP!

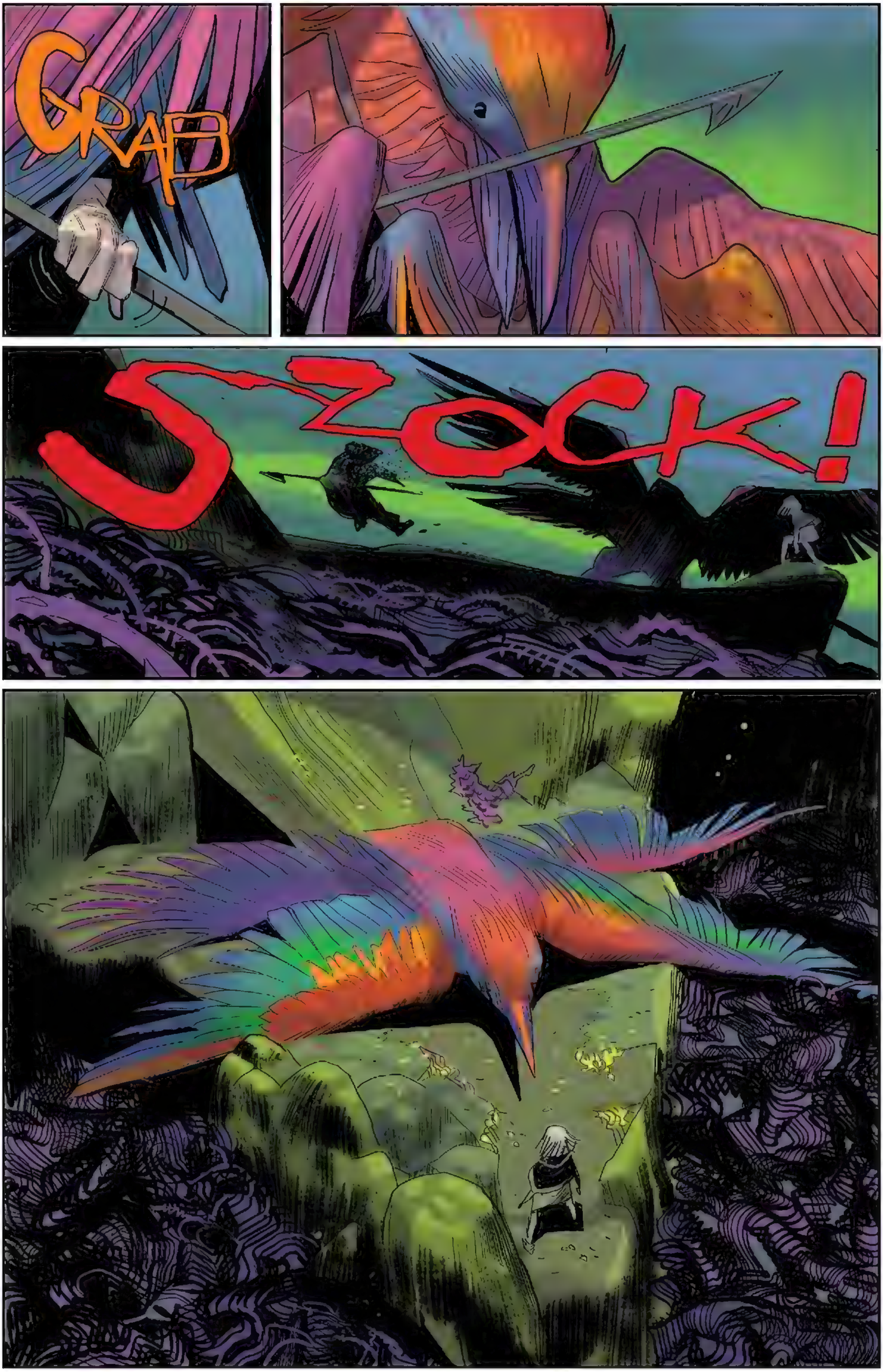

THWOKK!
RUN!
GET BACK HERE, DEMON!

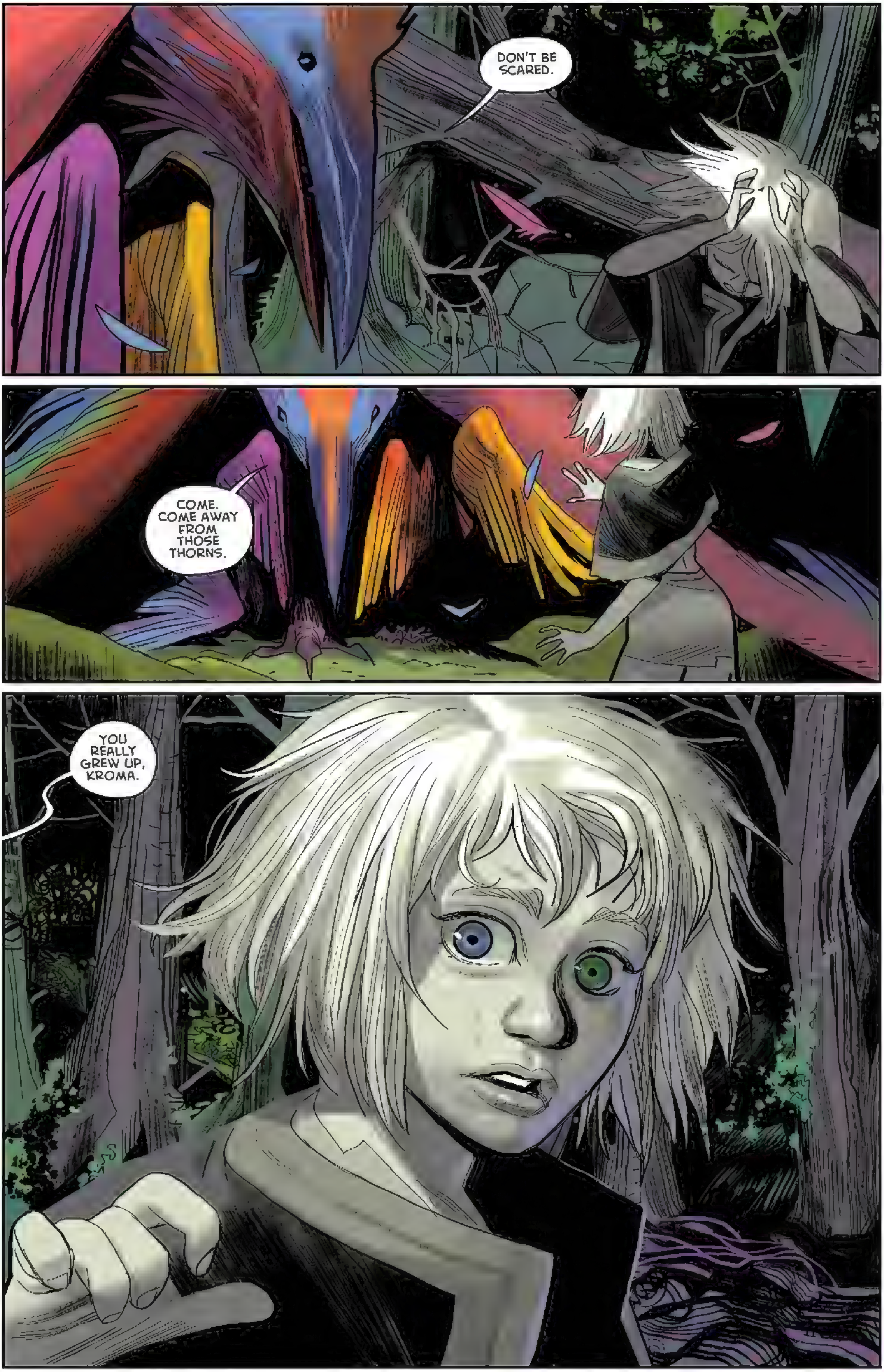

UP HERE!
THUP
UNFFF!
FRUSH
GOT YOU.

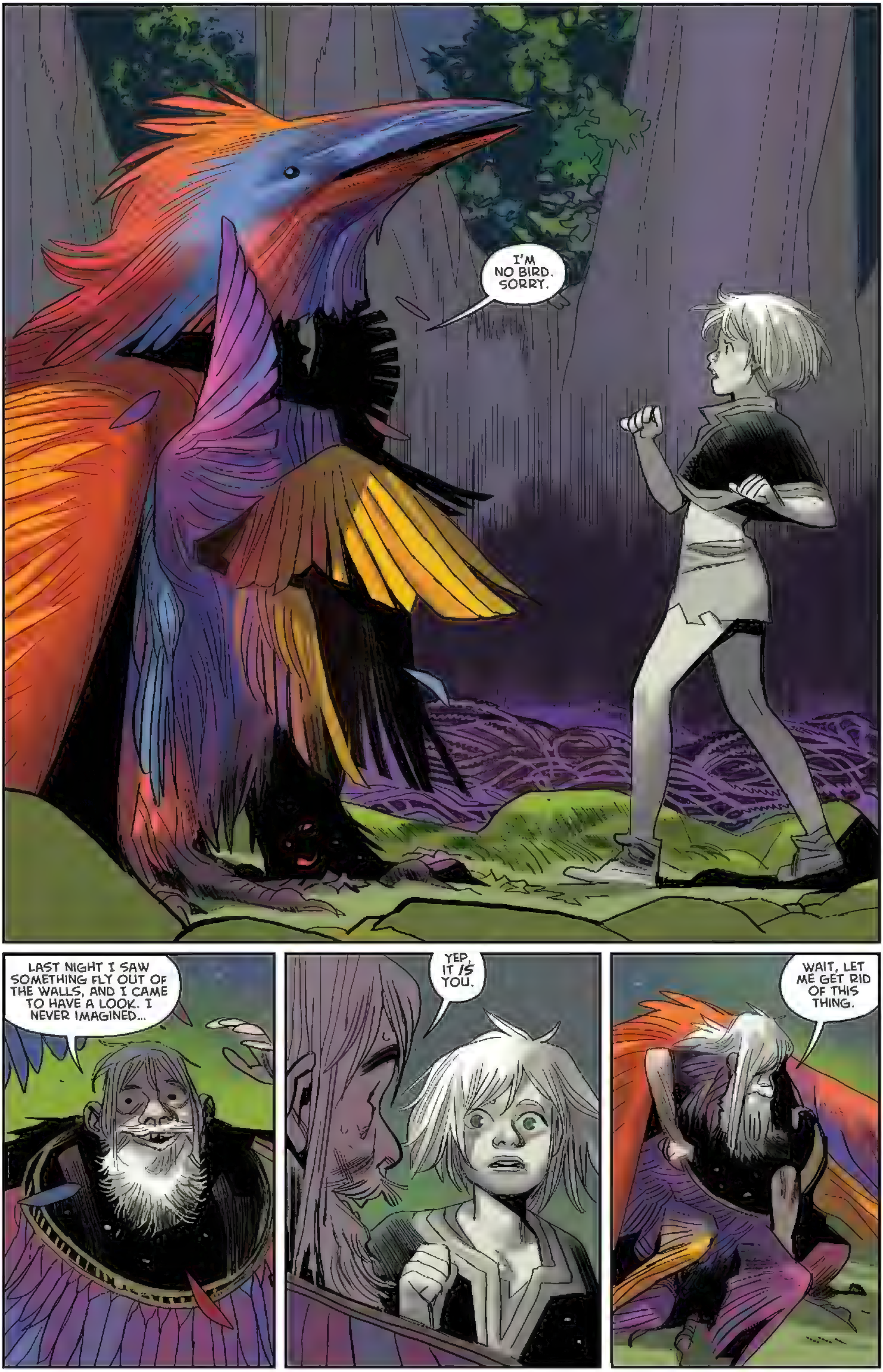

WE COULD BRING YOU BACK ALIVE, BUT, YOU KNOW, I'D HATE TO WASTE AN OPPORTUNITY LIKE THIS.
DAMOG, WHAT--
SHUT UP.
I CAN FINALLY MAKE THINGS RIGHT.
YOU! YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN KILLED WHEN YOU WERE A LITTLE CHILD.
WHY THEY CHOSE TO KEEP YOU ALIVE AS SOME KIND OF WALKING BAD OMEN IS... BEYOND ME.
YOU ARE AN INSULT TO ALL THE SACRIFICES WE MADE!
BUT--
KA-KAAAW!
AW
KAAWW
KAW
KEE
KA
KAW
AWW

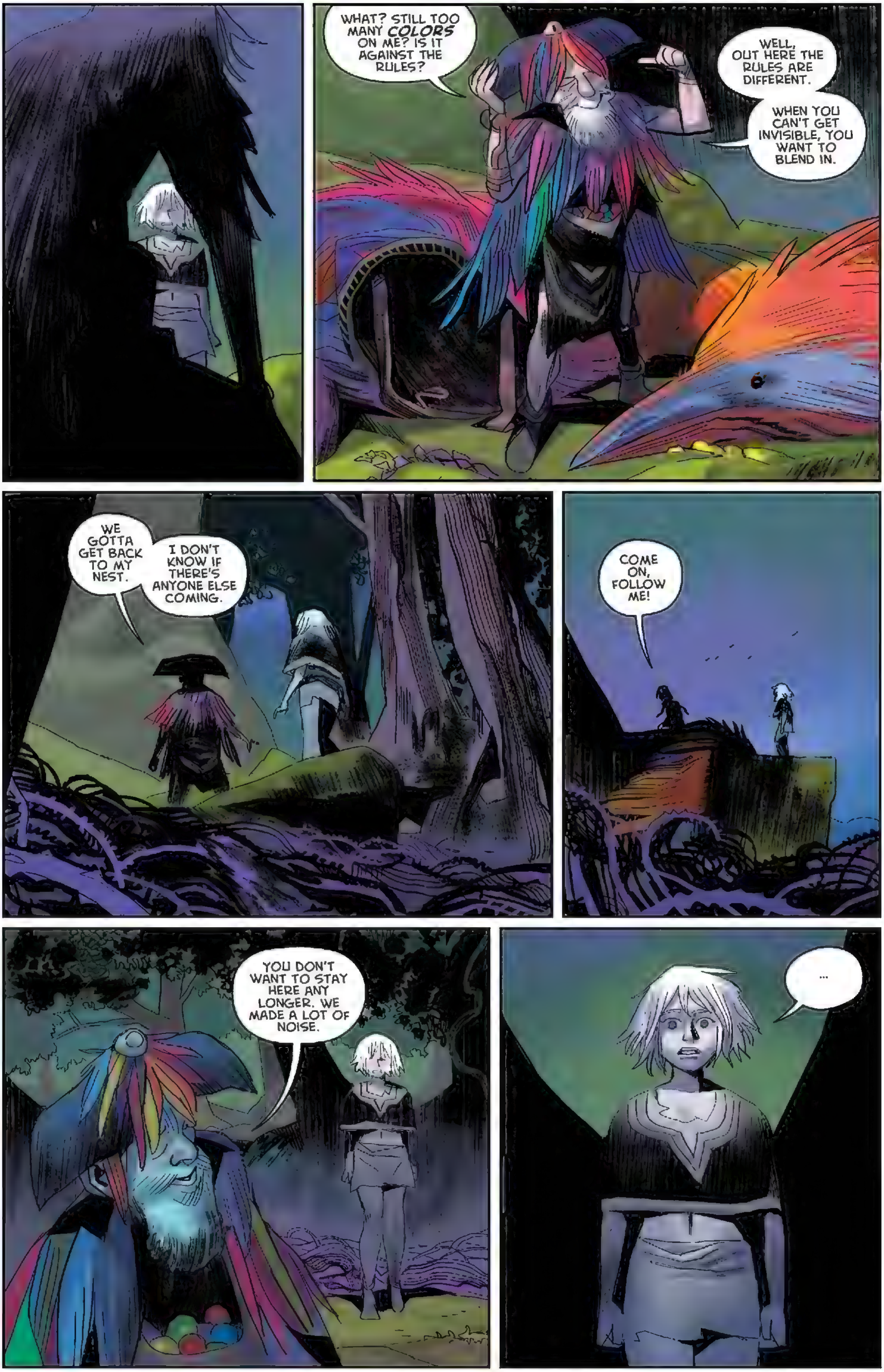

AAAAAW!

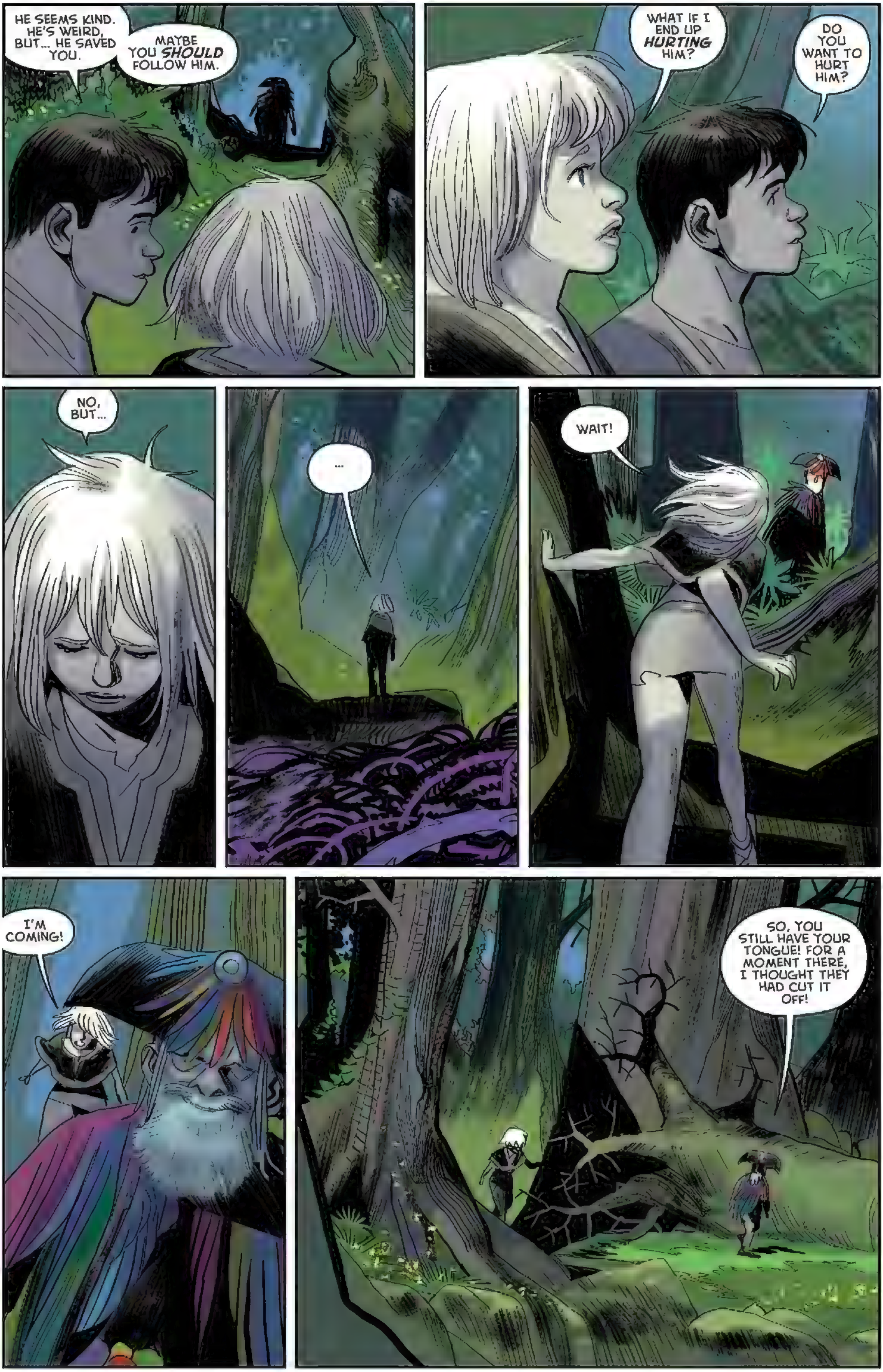

NO!
RAAAAGH
WHAT?!
PAFF!
PAFF
PAFF!
ACK! KAFF! KAFF!

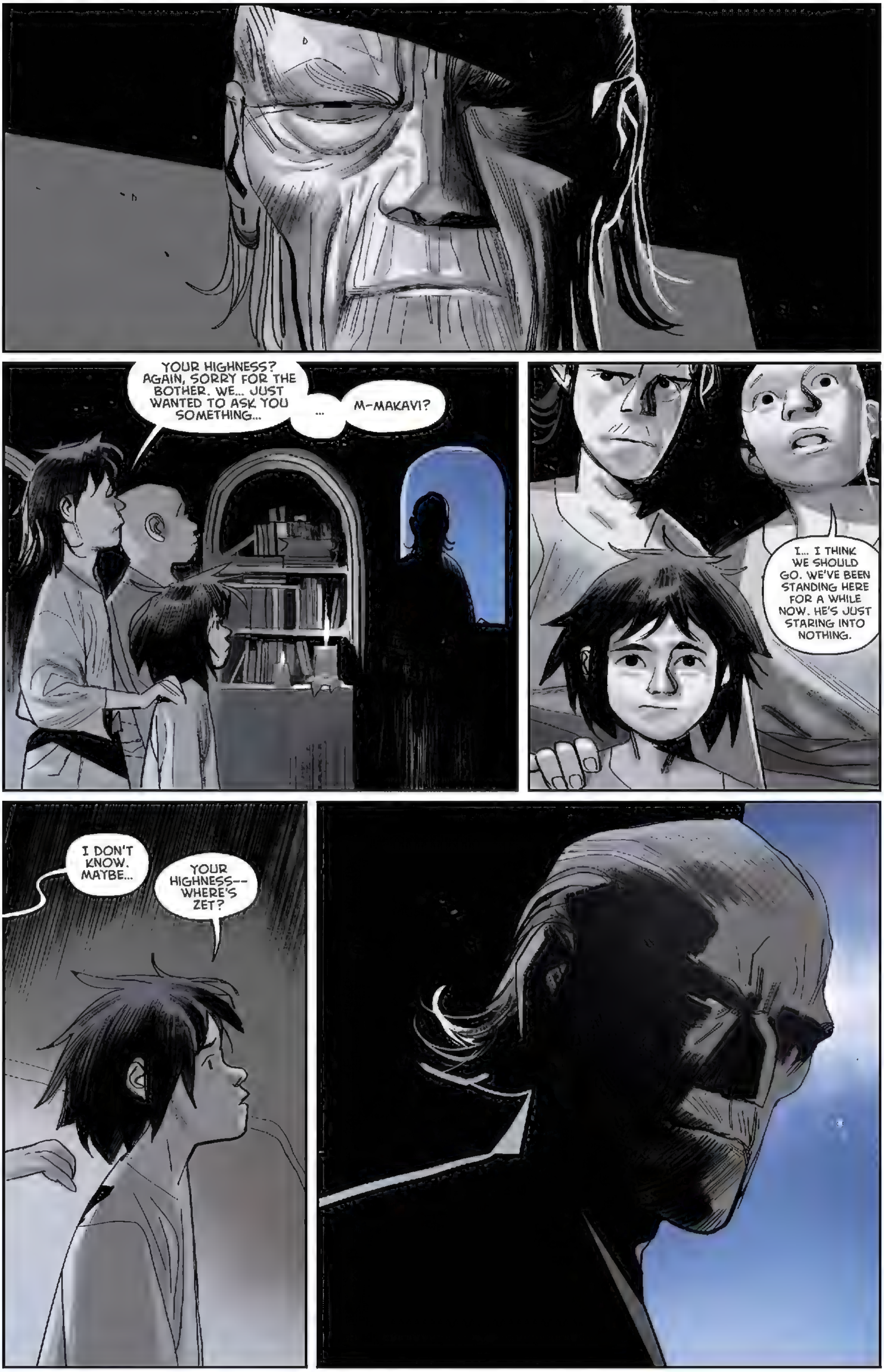

GRAB
SZOCK!

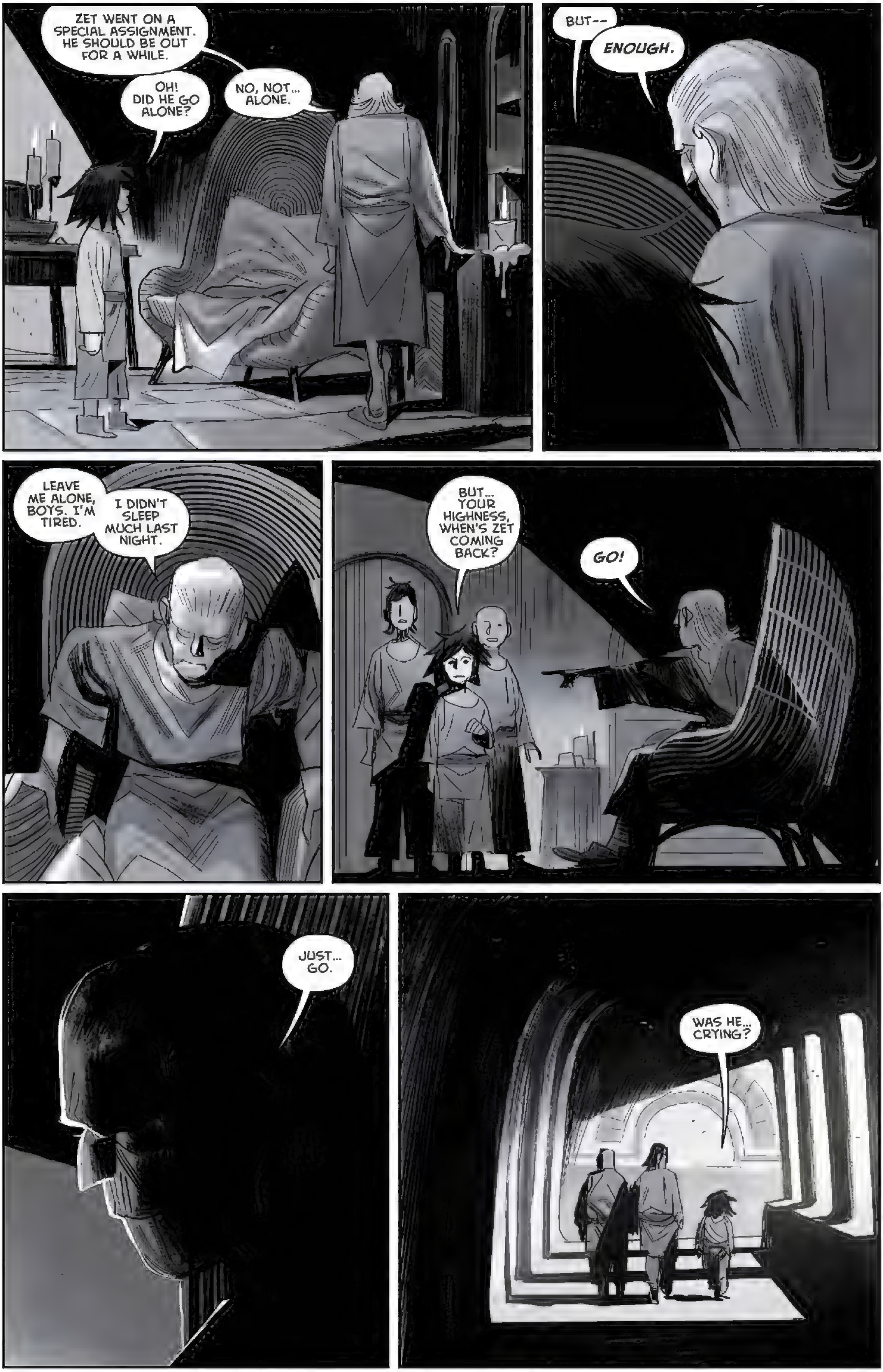

DON'T BE SCARED.
COME. COME AWAY FROM THOSE THORNS.
YOU REALLY GREW UP, KROMA.

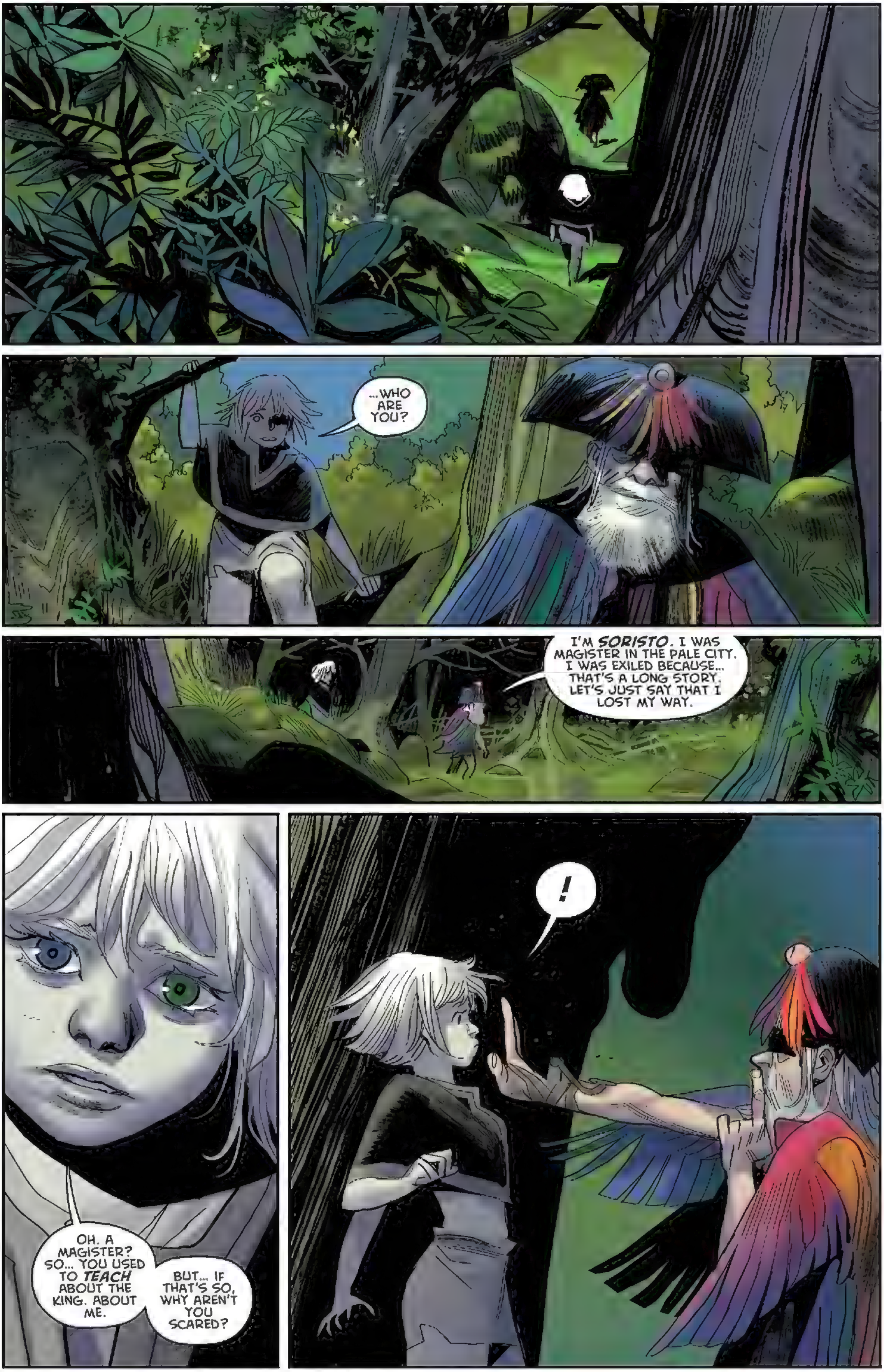

I'M NO BIRD. SORRY.
LAST NIGHT I SAW SOMETHING FLY OUT OF THE WALLS, AND I CAME TO HAVE A LOOK. I NEVER IMAGINED...
YEP, IT *IS* YOU.
WAIT, LET ME GET RID OF THIS THING.

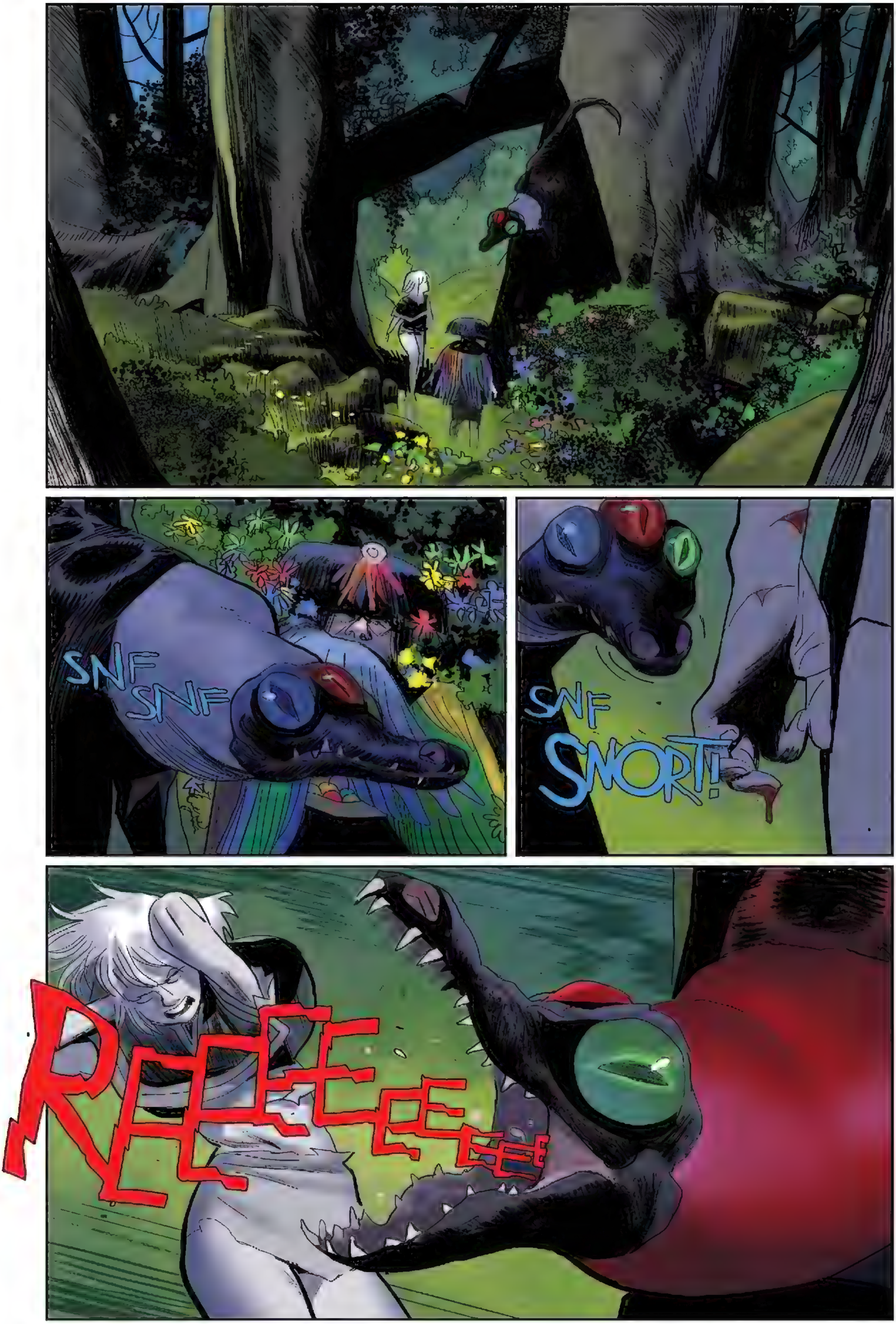

WHAT? STILL TOO MANY *COLORS* ON ME? IS IT AGAINST THE RULES?
WELL, OUT HERE THE RULES ARE DIFFERENT.
WHEN YOU CAN'T GET INVISIBLE, YOU WANT TO BLEND IN.
WE GOTTA GET BACK TO MY NEST.
I DON'T KNOW IF THERE'S ANYONE ELSE COMING.
COME ON, FOLLOW ME!
YOU DON'T WANT TO STAY HERE ANY LONGER. WE MADE A LOT OF NOISE.
...

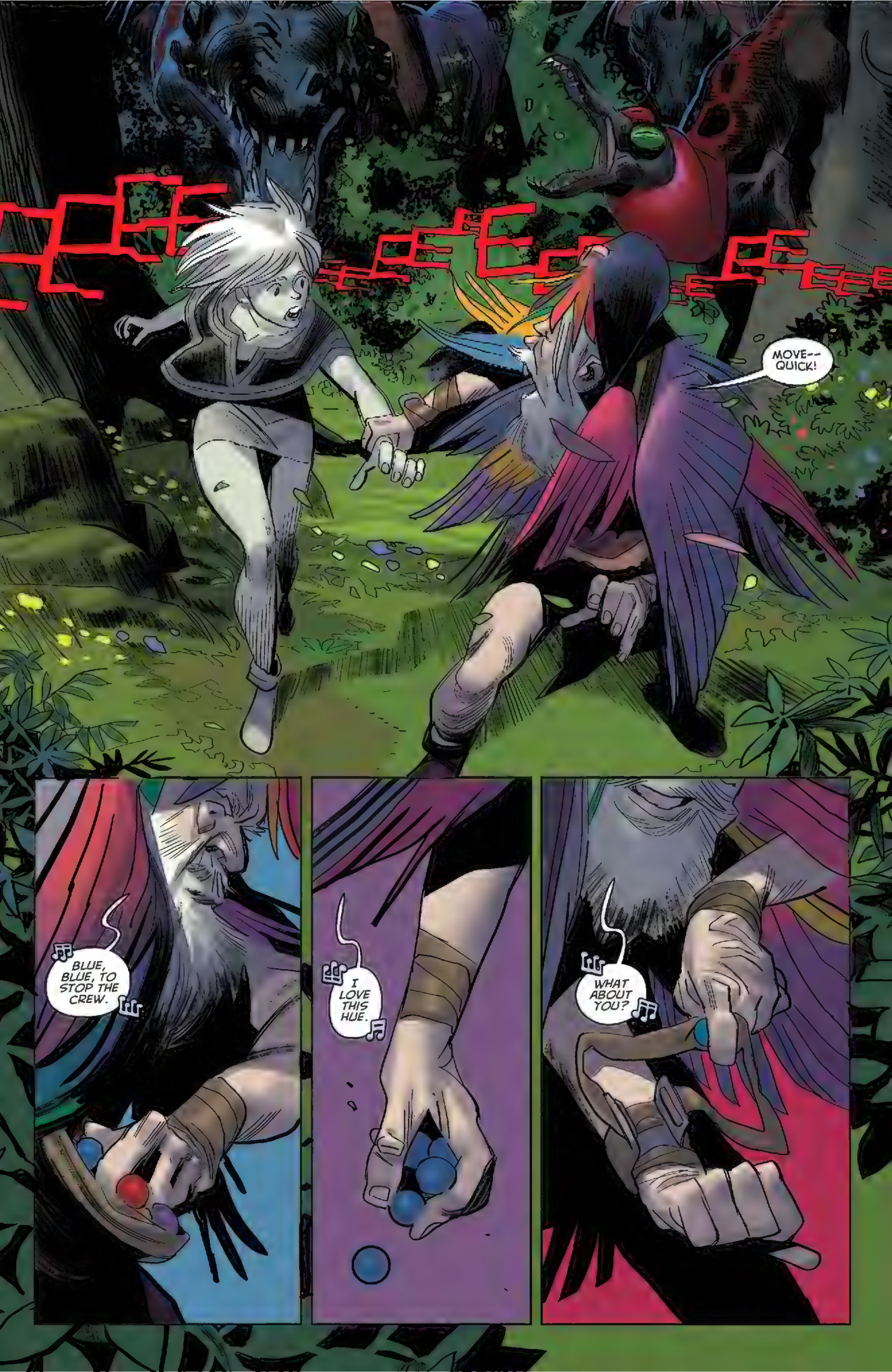

HE SEEMS KIND. HE'S WEIRD, BUT... HE SAVED YOU.
MAYBE YOU **SHOULD** FOLLOW HIM.
WHAT IF I END UP **HURTING** HIM?
DO YOU WANT TO HURT HIM?
NO, BUT...
...
WAIT!
I'M COMING!
SO, YOU STILL HAVE YOUR TONGUE! FOR A MOMENT THERE, I THOUGHT THEY HAD CUT IT OFF!

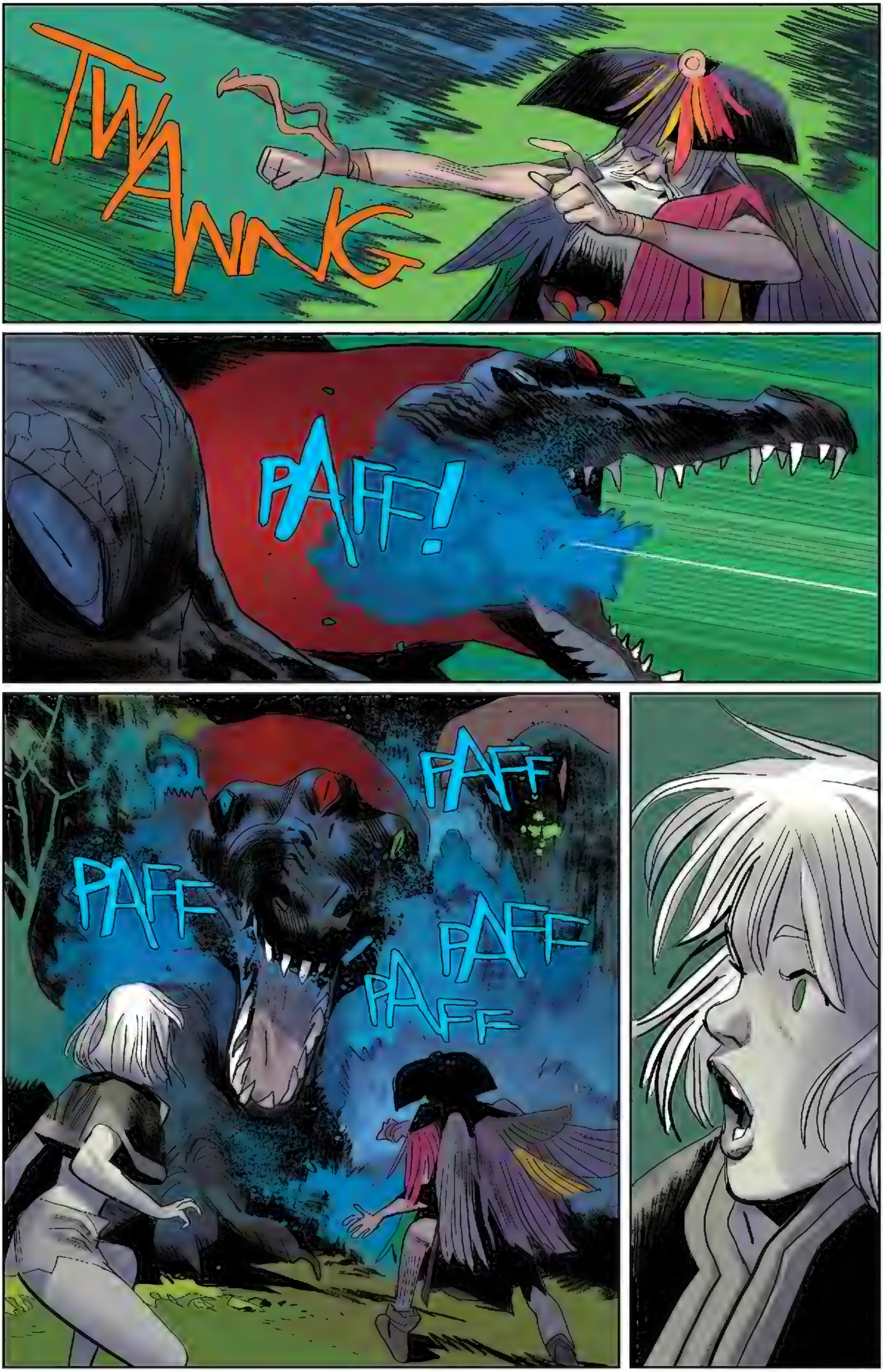

YOUR HIGHNESS? AGAIN, SORRY FOR THE BOTHER. WE... JUST WANTED TO ASK YOU SOMETHING...
...
M-MAKAVI?
I... I THINK WE SHOULD GO. WE'VE BEEN STANDING HERE FOR A WHILE NOW. HE'S JUST STARING INTO NOTHING.
I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE...
YOUR HIGHNESS-- WHERE'S ZET?

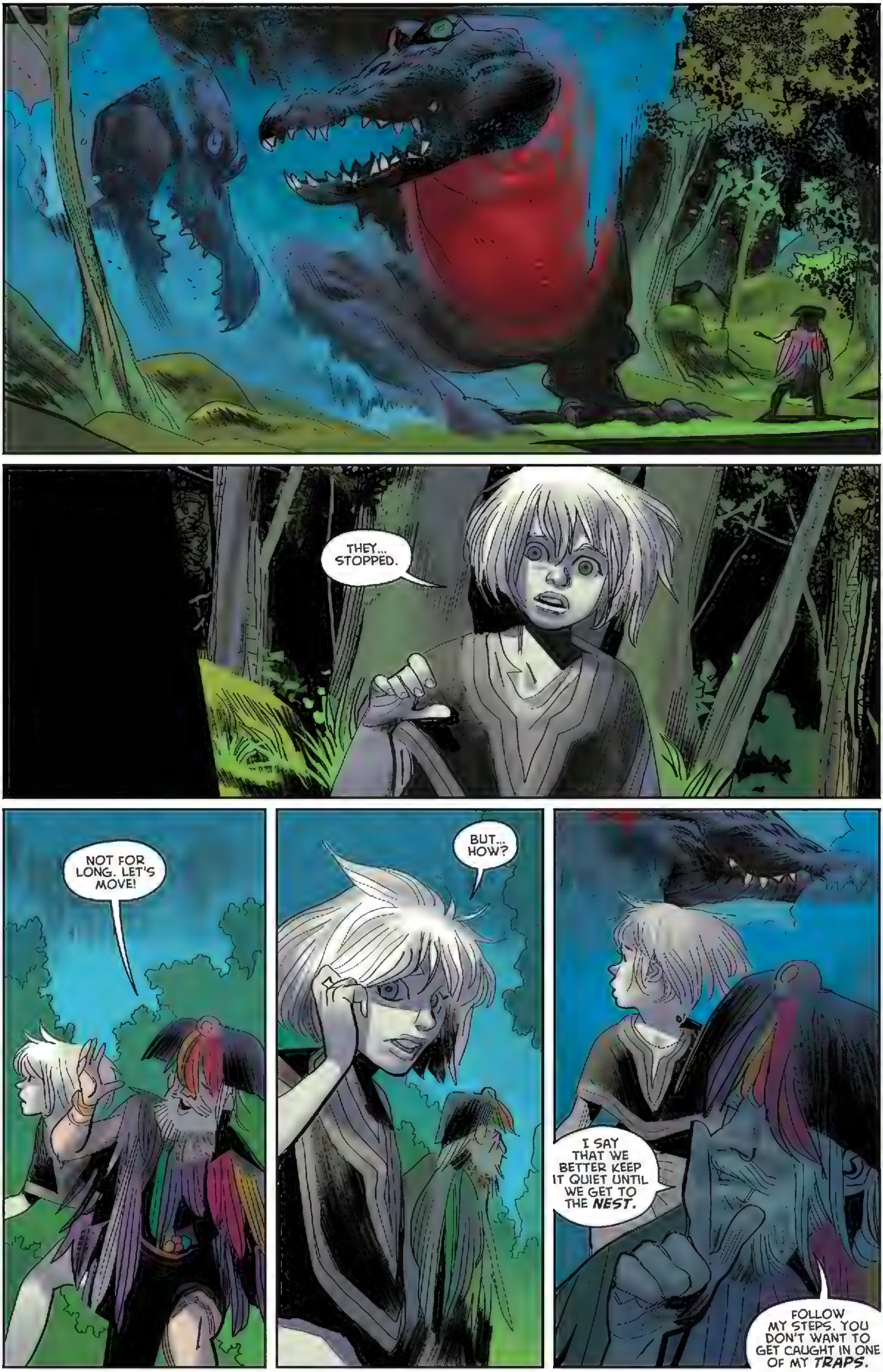

ZET WENT ON A SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT. HE SHOULD BE OUT FOR A WHILE.
OH! DID HE GO ALONE?
NO, NOT... ALONE.
BUT--
ENOUGH.
LEAVE ME ALONE, BOYS. I'M TIRED.
I DIDN'T SLEEP MUCH LAST NIGHT.
BUT... YOUR HIGHNESS, WHEN'S ZET COMING BACK?
GO!
JUST... GO.
WAS HE... CRYING?

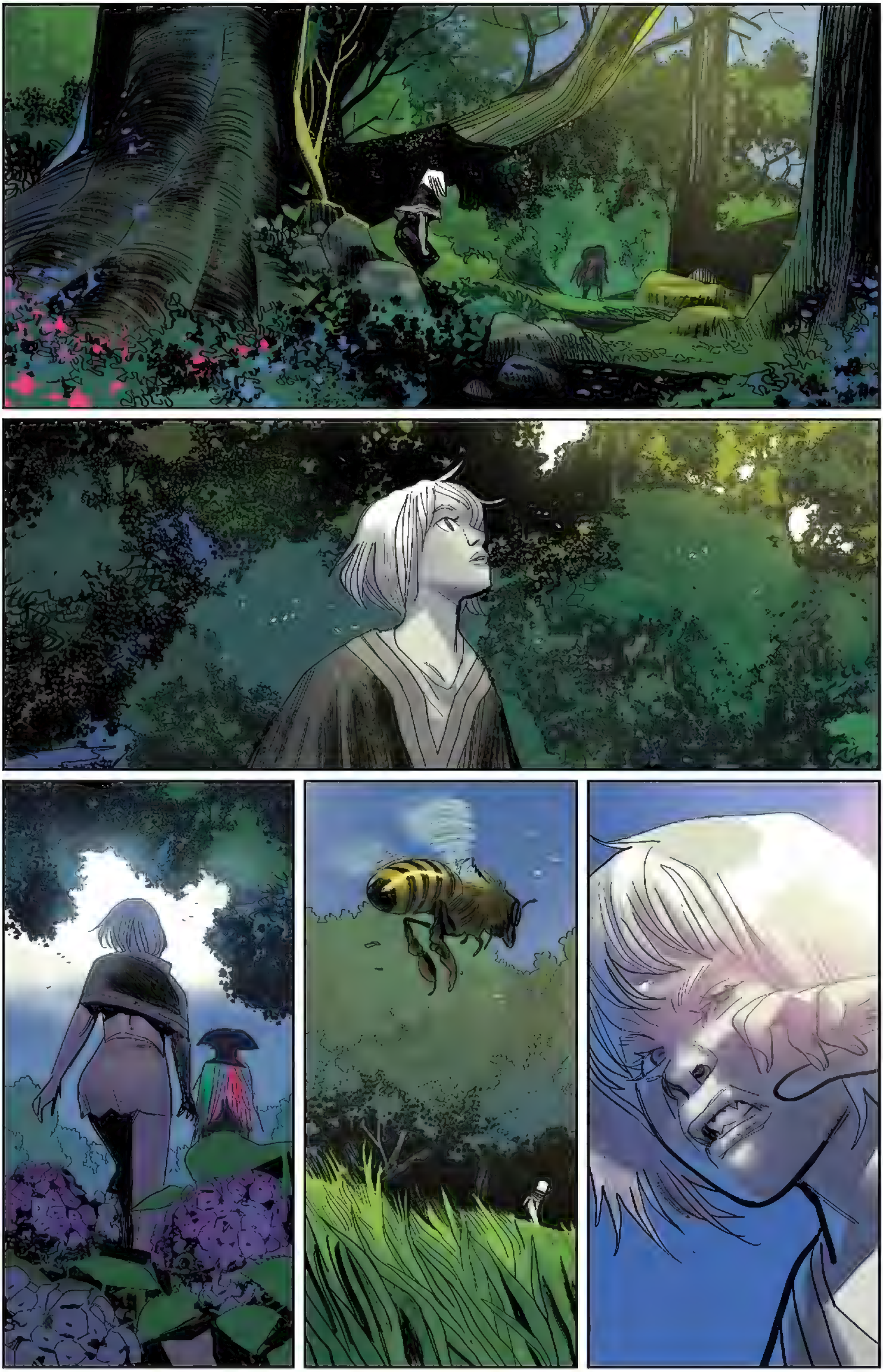

...WHO ARE YOU?
I'M *SORISTO*. I WAS MAGISTER IN THE PALE CITY. I WAS EXILED BECAUSE... THAT'S A LONG STORY. LET'S JUST SAY THAT I LOST MY WAY.
OH. A MAGISTER? SO... YOU USED TO *TEACH* ABOUT THE KING. ABOUT ME.
BUT... IF THAT'S SO, WHY AREN'T YOU SCARED?
!

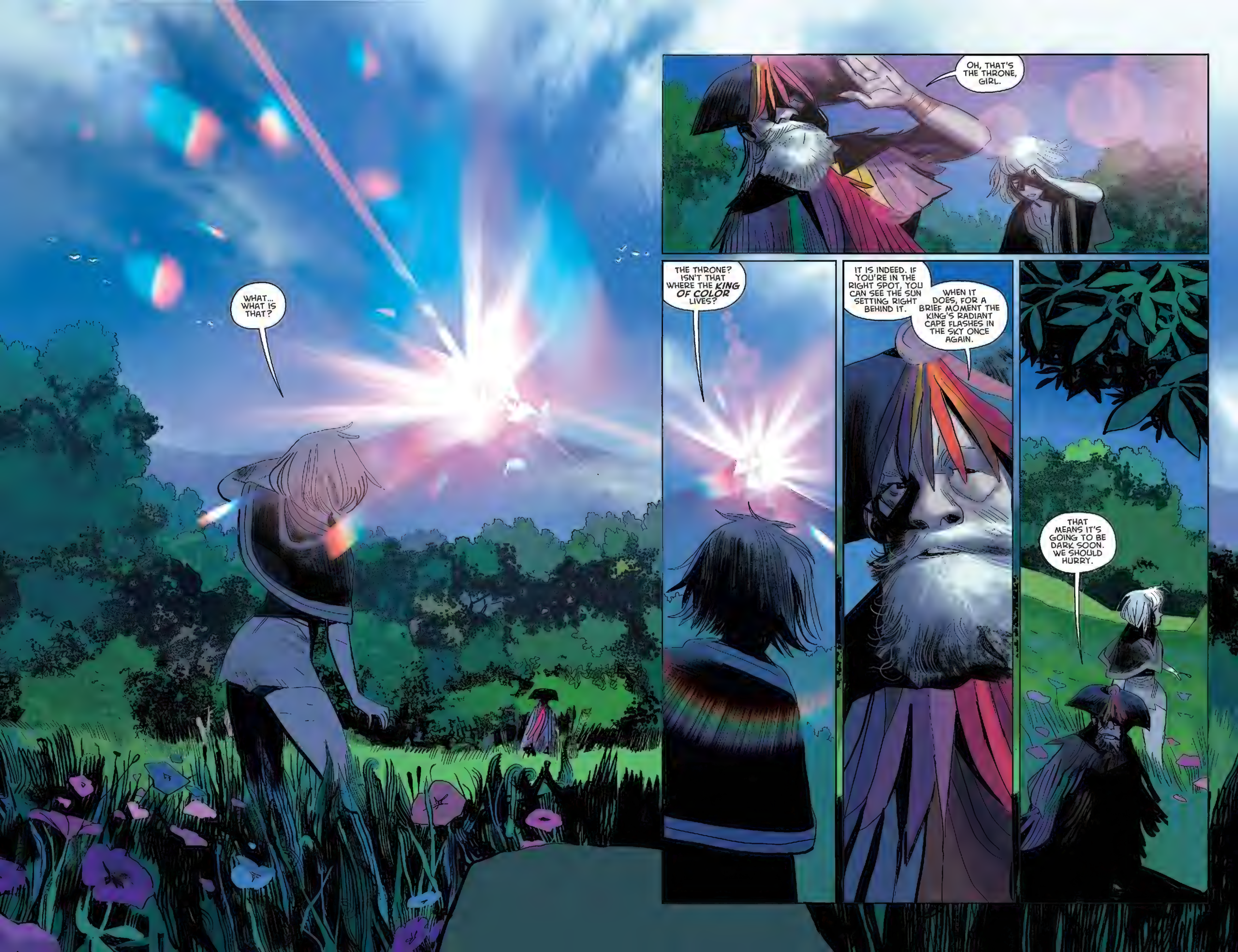

SNF SNF
SNF
SNORT!
REEEEEEEEEEE

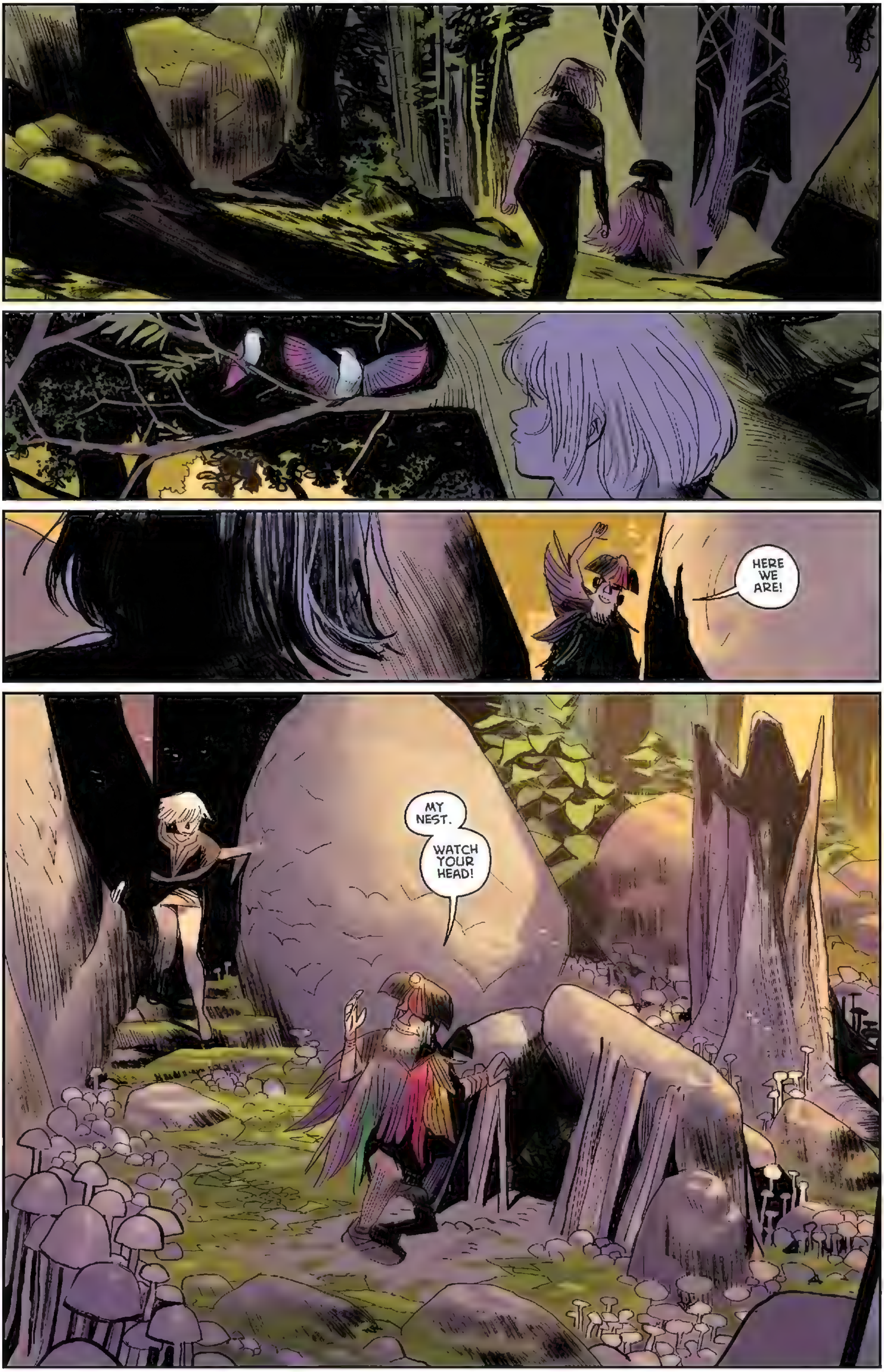

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
MOVE-- QUICK!
BLUE, BLUE, TO STOP THE CREW.
I LOVE THIS HUE.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?

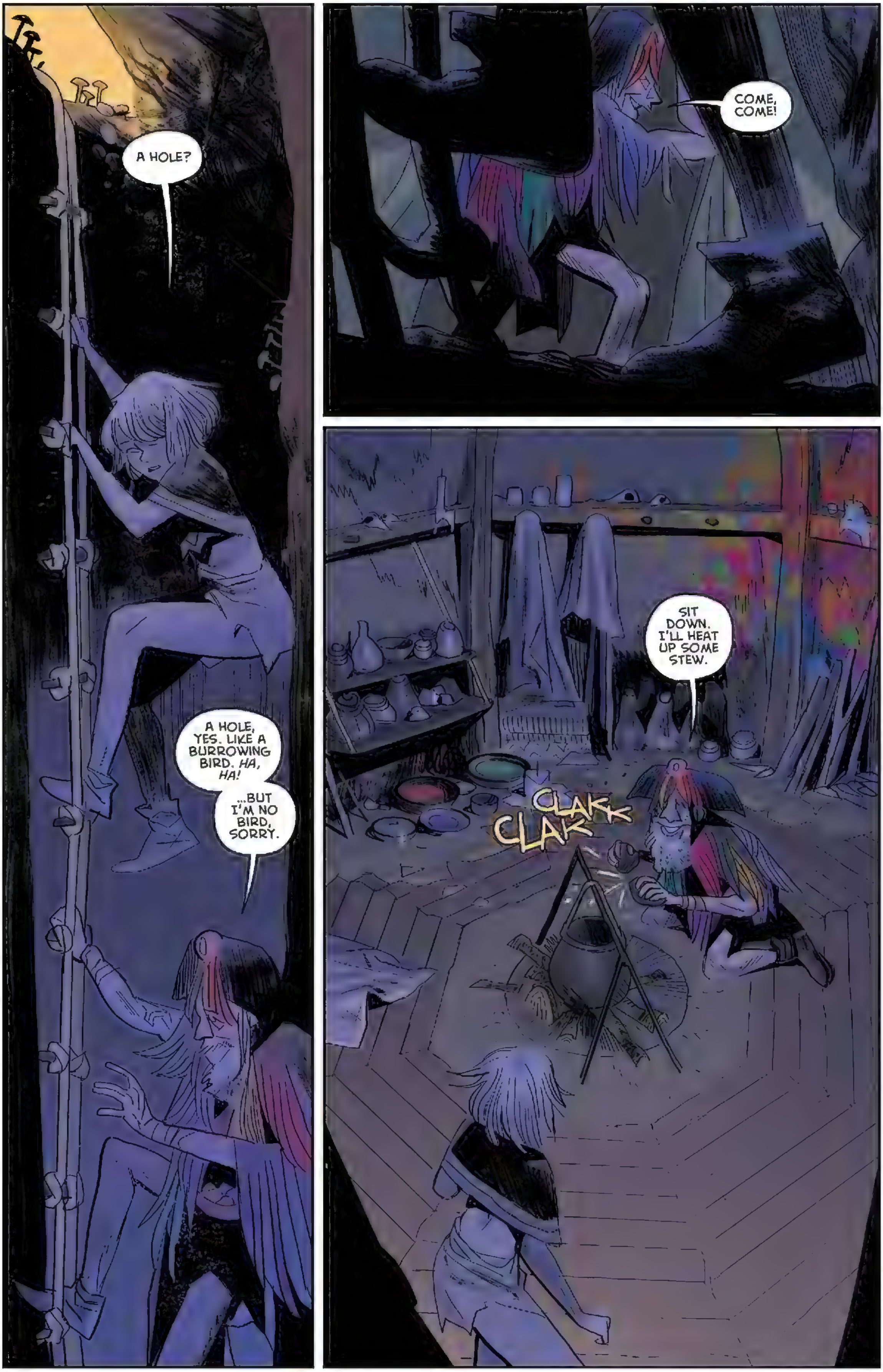

TWANNG
PAFF!
PAFF
PAFF
PAFF
PAFF

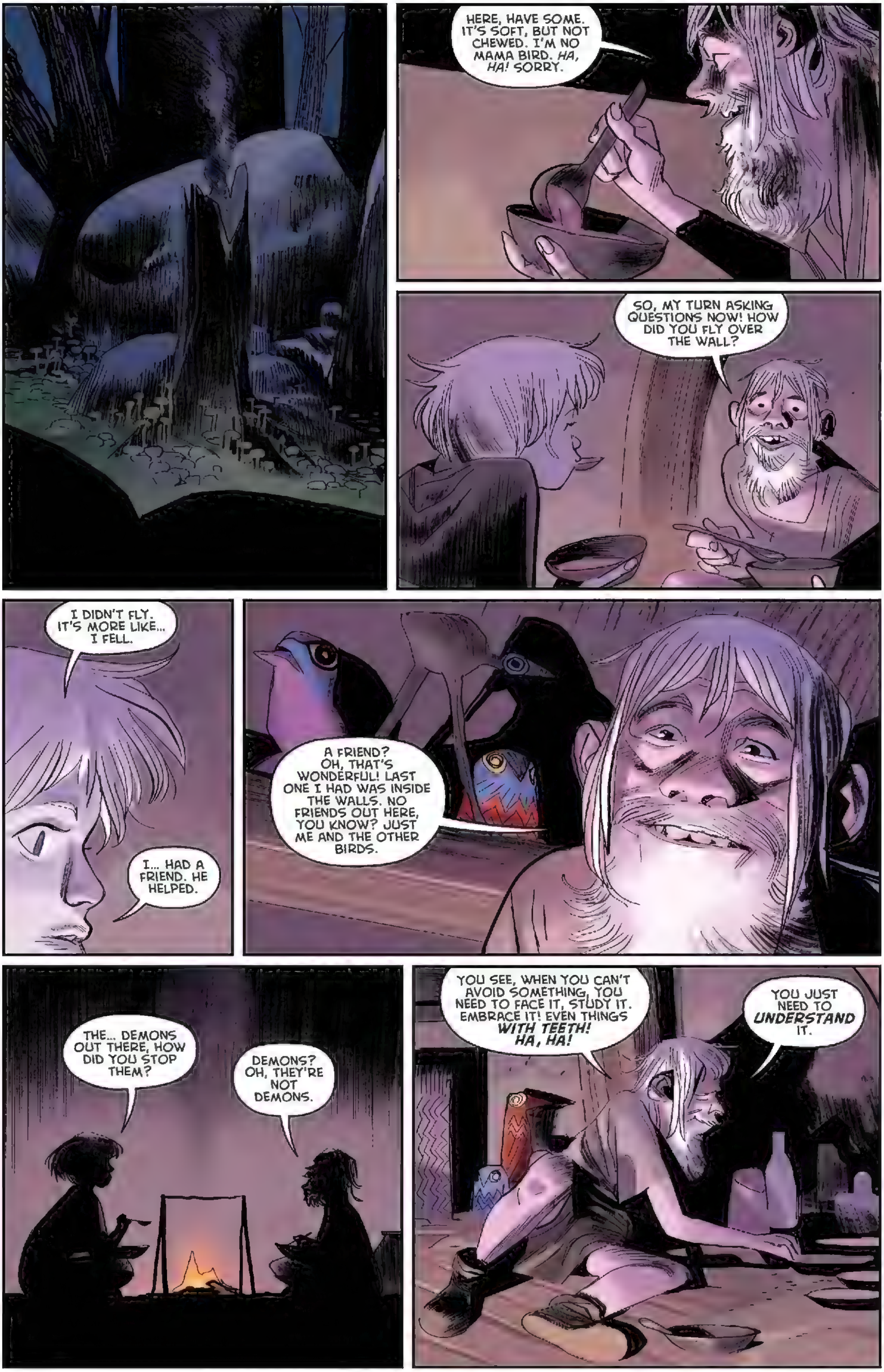

THEY... STOPPED.
NOT FOR LONG. LET'S MOVE!
BUT... HOW?
I SAY THAT WE BETTER KEEP IT QUIET UNTIL WE GET TO THE *NEST*.
FOLLOW MY STEPS. YOU DON'T WANT TO GET CAUGHT IN ONE OF MY *TRAPS*.

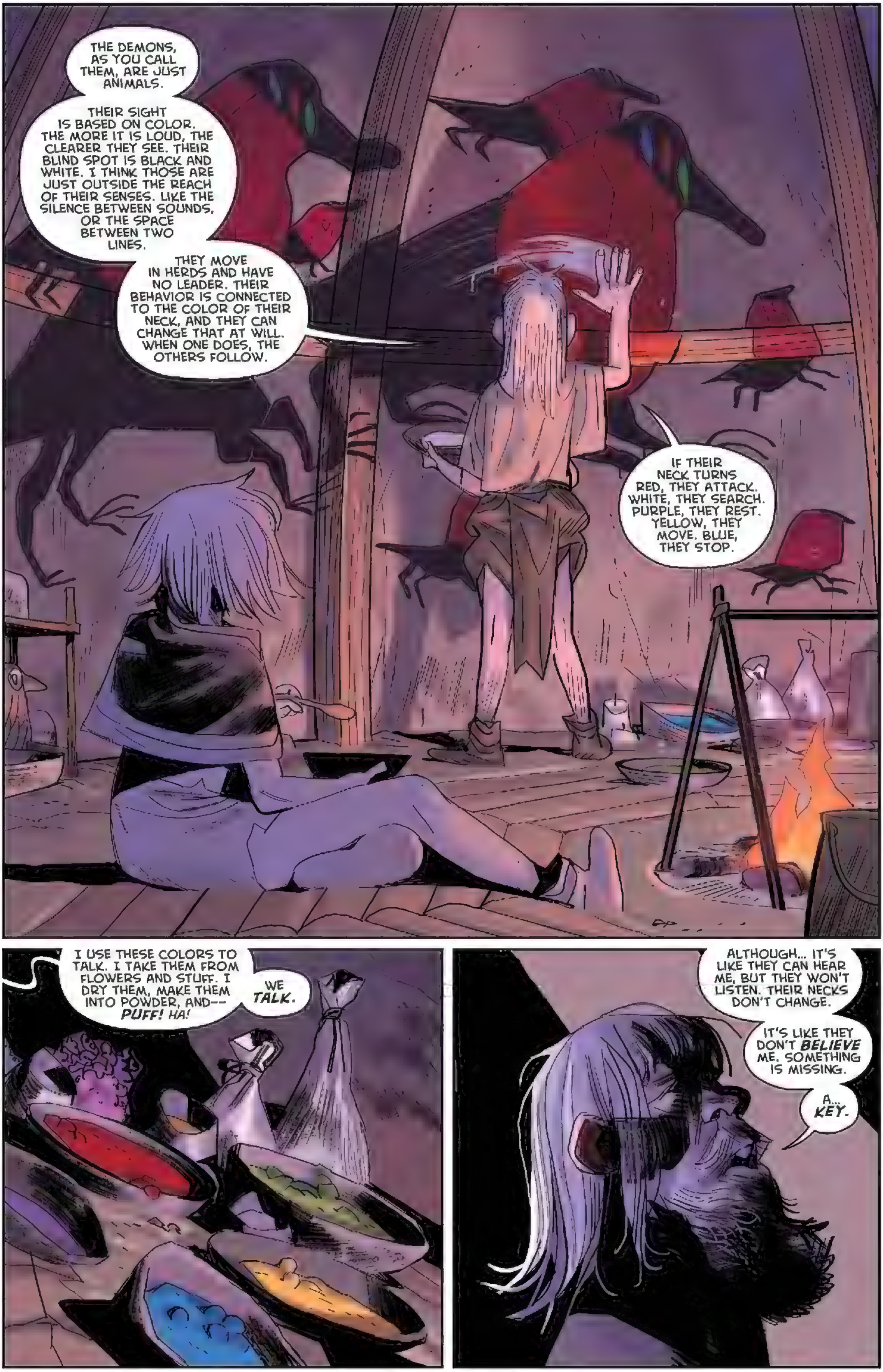


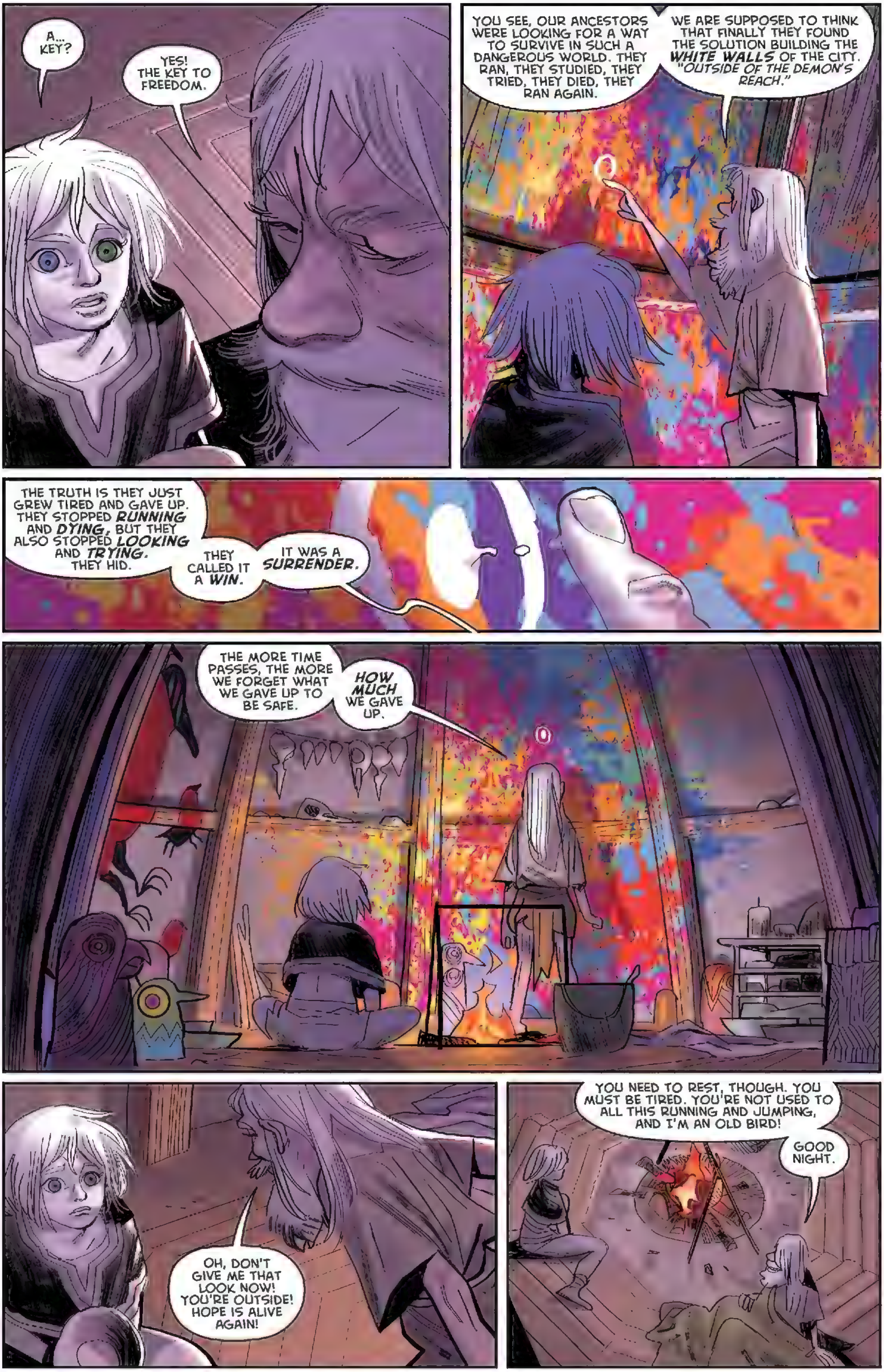

WHAT... WHAT IS THAT?
OH, THAT'S THE THRONE, GIRL.
THE THRONE? ISN'T THAT WHERE THE *KING OF COLOR* LIVES?
IT IS INDEED. IF YOU'RE IN THE RIGHT SPOT, YOU CAN SEE THE SUN SETTING RIGHT BEHIND IT.
WHEN IT DOES, FOR A BRIEF MOMENT THE KING'S RADIANT CAPE FLASHES IN THE SKY ONCE AGAIN.
THAT MEANS IT'S GOING TO BE DARK SOON. WE SHOULD HURRY.

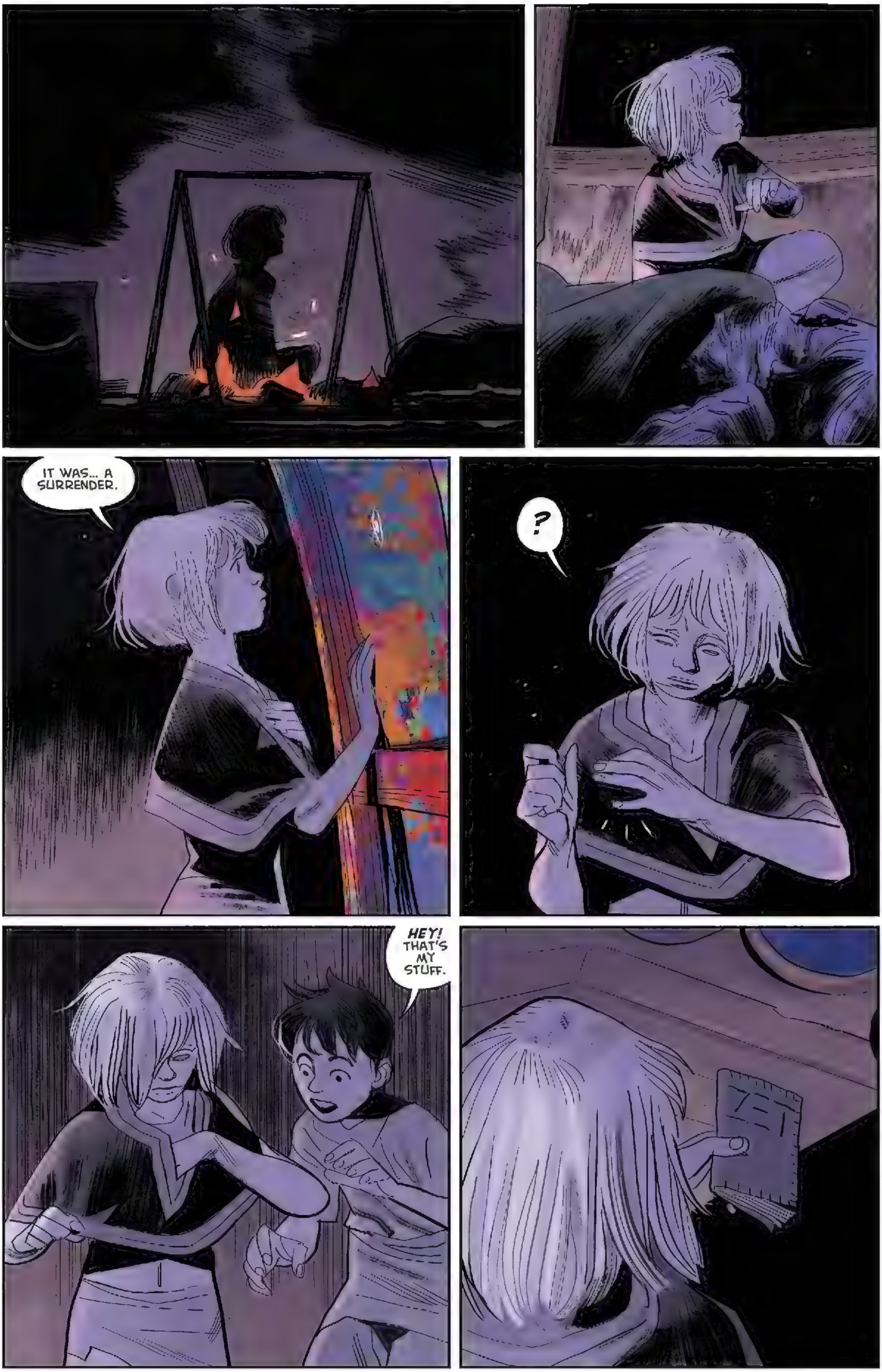

HERE WE ARE!
MY NEST.
WATCH YOUR HEAD!

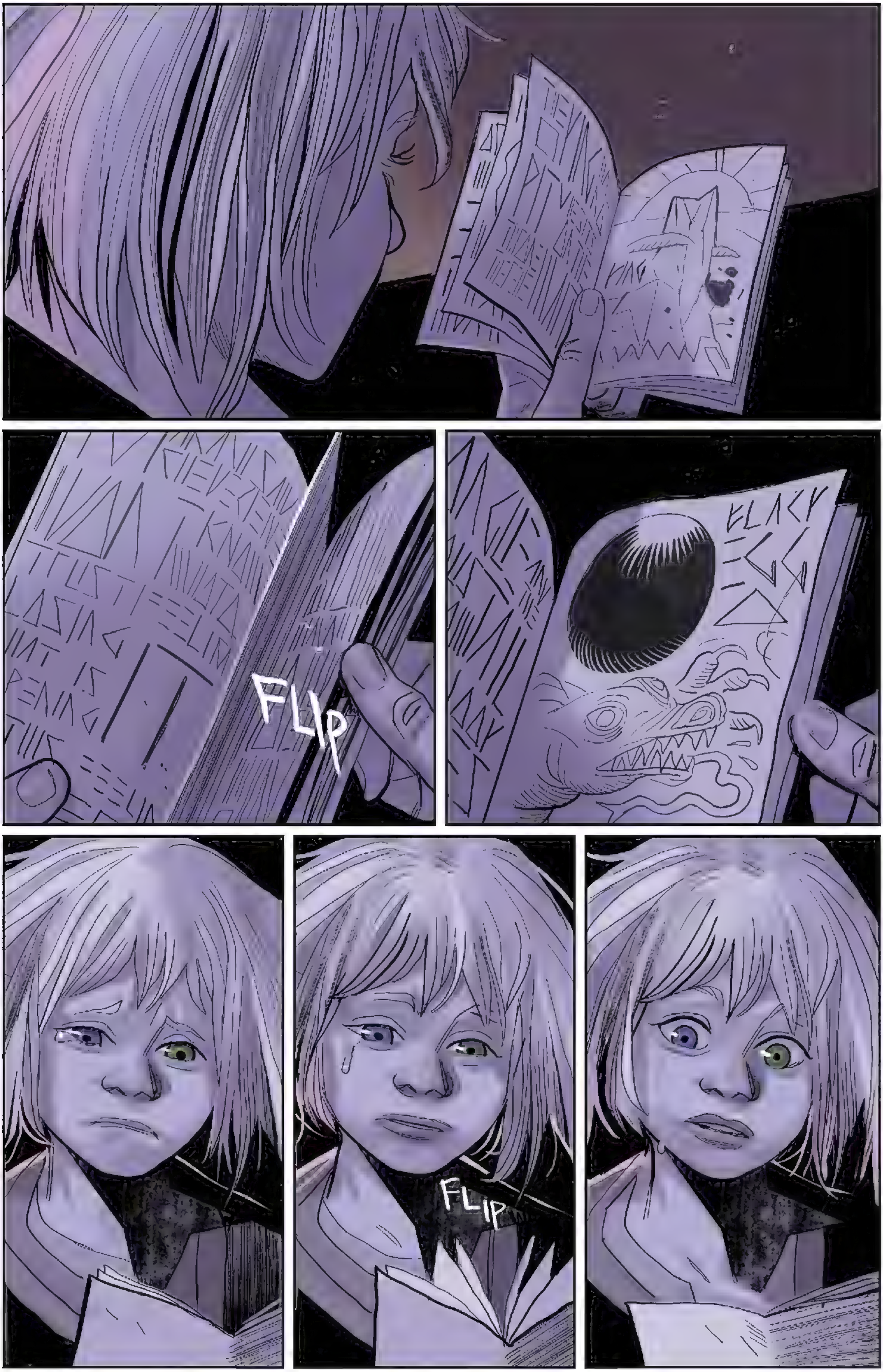

A HOLE?
A HOLE, YES. LIKE A BURROWING BIRD. *HA, HA!*
...BUT I'M NO BIRD, SORRY.
COME, COME!
SIT DOWN. I'LL HEAT UP SOME STEW.
CLAKK
CLAK

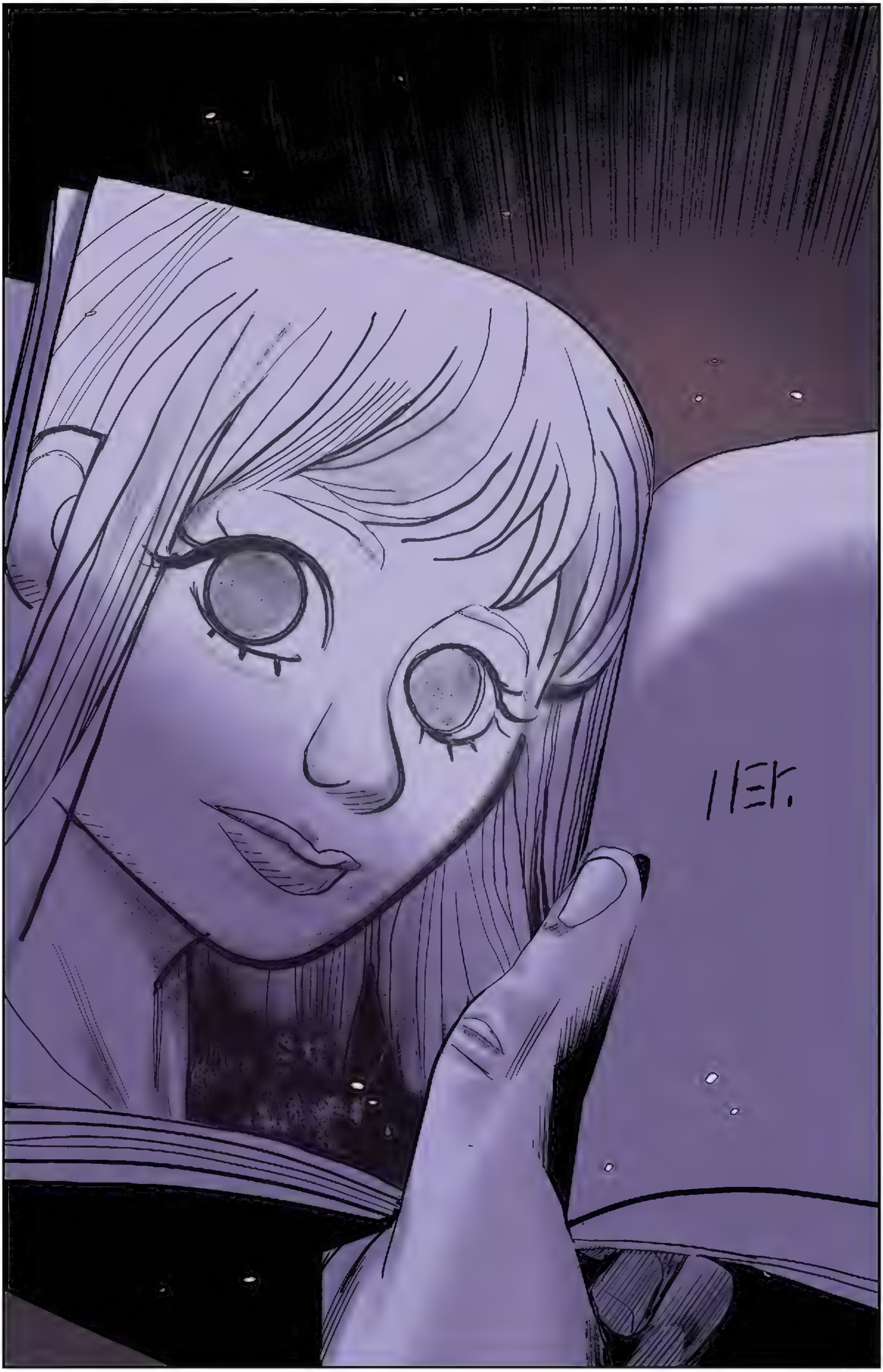

HERE, HAVE SOME. IT'S SOFT, BUT NOT CHEWED. I'M NO MAMA BIRD. *HA, HA!* SORRY.
SO, MY TURN ASKING QUESTIONS NOW! HOW DID YOU FLY OVER THE WALL?
I DIDN'T FLY. IT'S MORE LIKE... I FELL.
I... HAD A FRIEND. HE HELPED.
A FRIEND? OH, THAT'S WONDERFUL! LAST ONE I HAD WAS INSIDE THE WALLS. NO FRIENDS OUT HERE, YOU KNOW? JUST ME AND THE OTHER BIRDS.
THE... DEMONS OUT THERE, HOW DID YOU STOP THEM?
DEMONS? OH, THEY'RE NOT DEMONS.
YOU SEE, WHEN YOU CAN'T AVOID SOMETHING, YOU NEED TO FACE IT, STUDY IT. EMBRACE IT! EVEN THINGS ***WITH TEETH! HA, HA!***
YOU JUST NEED TO ***UNDERSTAND*** IT.

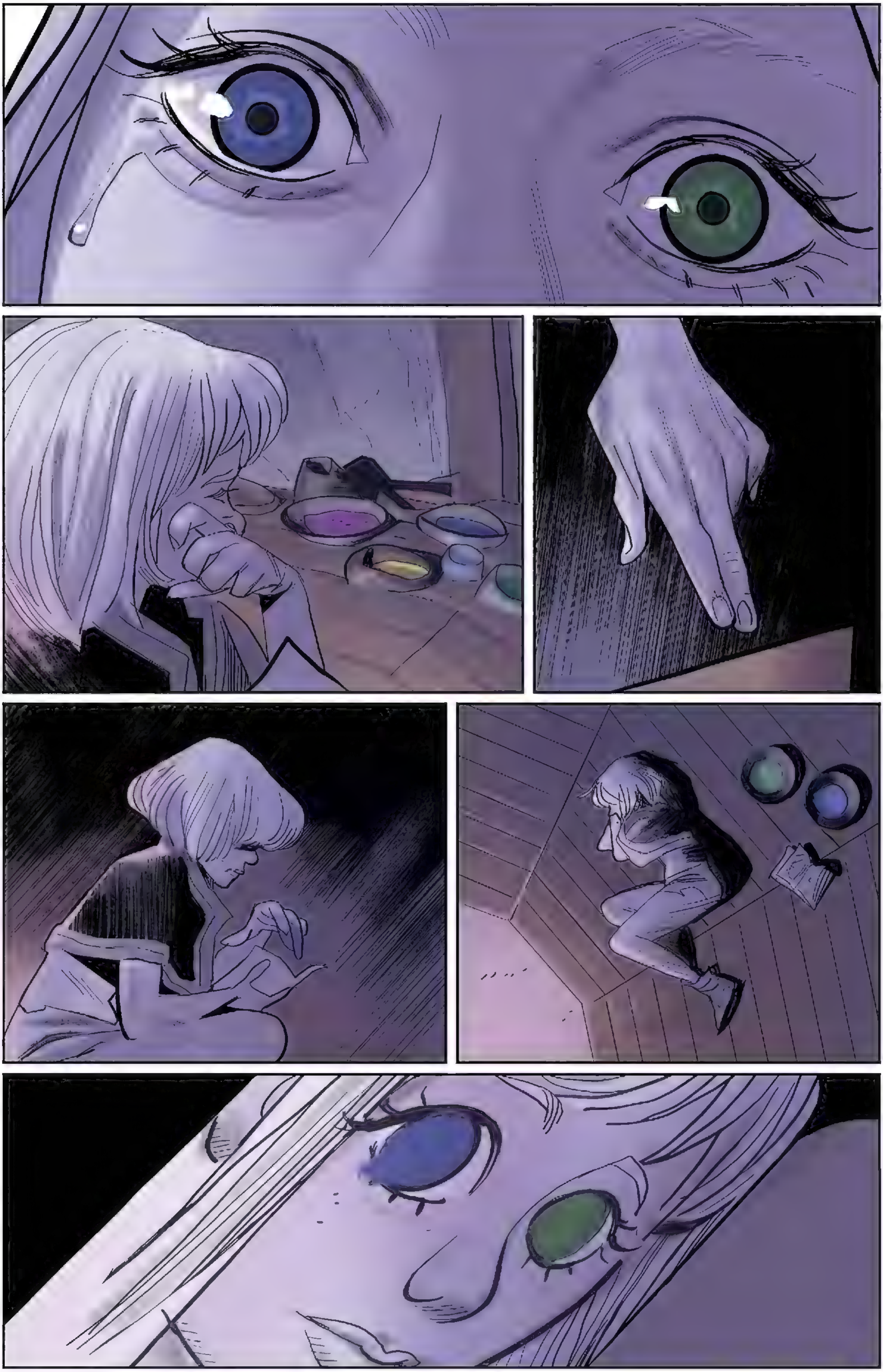

THE DEMONS, AS YOU CALL THEM, ARE JUST ANIMALS.
THEIR SIGHT IS BASED ON COLOR. THE MORE IT IS LOUD, THE CLEARER THEY SEE. THEIR BLIND SPOT IS BLACK AND WHITE. I THINK THOSE ARE JUST OUTSIDE THE REACH OF THEIR SENSES. LIKE THE SILENCE BETWEEN SOUNDS, OR THE SPACE BETWEEN TWO LINES.
THEY MOVE IN HERDS AND HAVE NO LEADER. THEIR BEHAVIOR IS CONNECTED TO THE COLOR OF THEIR NECK, AND THEY CAN CHANGE THAT AT WILL. WHEN ONE DOES, THE OTHERS FOLLOW.
IF THEIR NECK TURNS RED, THEY ATTACK. WHITE, THEY SEARCH. PURPLE, THEY REST. YELLOW, THEY MOVE. BLUE, THEY STOP.
I USE THESE COLORS TO TALK. I TAKE THEM FROM FLOWERS AND STUFF. I DRY THEM, MAKE THEM INTO POWDER, AND-- ***PUFF!*** HA!
WE ***TALK.***
ALTHOUGH... IT'S LIKE THEY CAN HEAR ME, BUT THEY WON'T LISTEN. THEIR NECKS DON'T CHANGE.
IT'S LIKE THEY DON'T ***BELIEVE*** ME. SOMETHING IS MISSING.
A... ***KEY.***

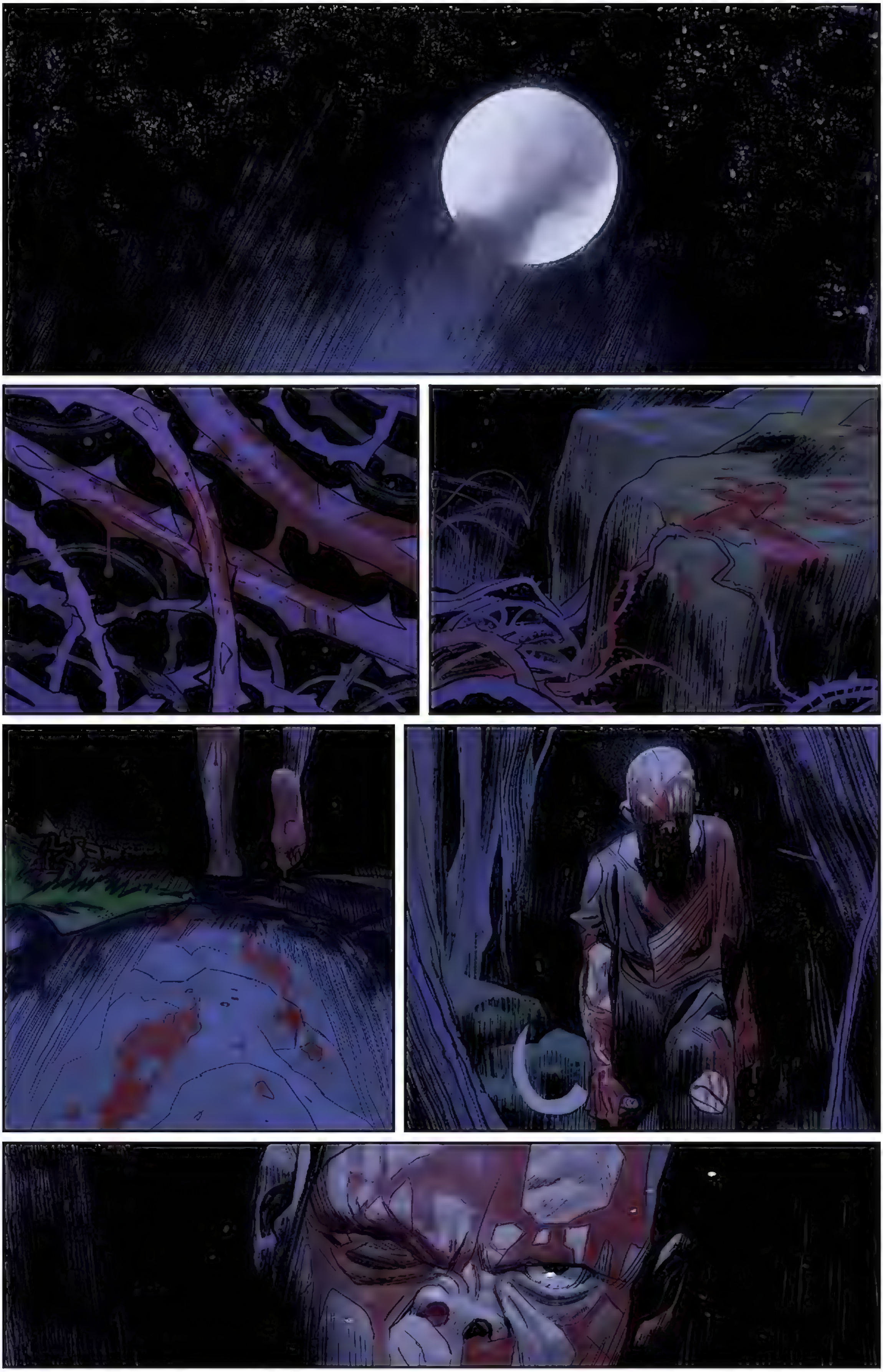

A... KEY?
YES! THE KEY TO FREEDOM.
YOU SEE, OUR ANCESTORS WERE LOOKING FOR A WAY TO SURVIVE IN SUCH A DANGEROUS WORLD. THEY RAN, THEY STUDIED, THEY TRIED, THEY DIED, THEY RAN AGAIN.
WE ARE SUPPOSED TO THINK THAT FINALLY THEY FOUND THE SOLUTION BUILDING THE ***WHITE WALLS*** OF THE CITY. *"OUTSIDE OF THE DEMON'S REACH."*
THE TRUTH IS THEY JUST GREW TIRED AND GAVE UP. THEY STOPPED ***RUNNING*** AND ***DYING***, BUT THEY ALSO STOPPED ***LOOKING*** AND ***TRYING***. THEY HID.
THEY CALLED IT A ***WIN***.
IT WAS A ***SURRENDER***.
THE MORE TIME PASSES, THE MORE WE FORGET WHAT WE GAVE UP TO BE SAFE.
HOW MUCH WE GAVE UP.
OH, DON'T GIVE ME THAT LOOK NOW! YOU'RE OUTSIDE! HOPE IS ALIVE AGAIN!
YOU NEED TO REST, THOUGH. YOU MUST BE TIRED. YOU'RE NOT USED TO ALL THIS RUNNING AND JUMPING, AND I'M AN OLD BIRD!
GOOD NIGHT.

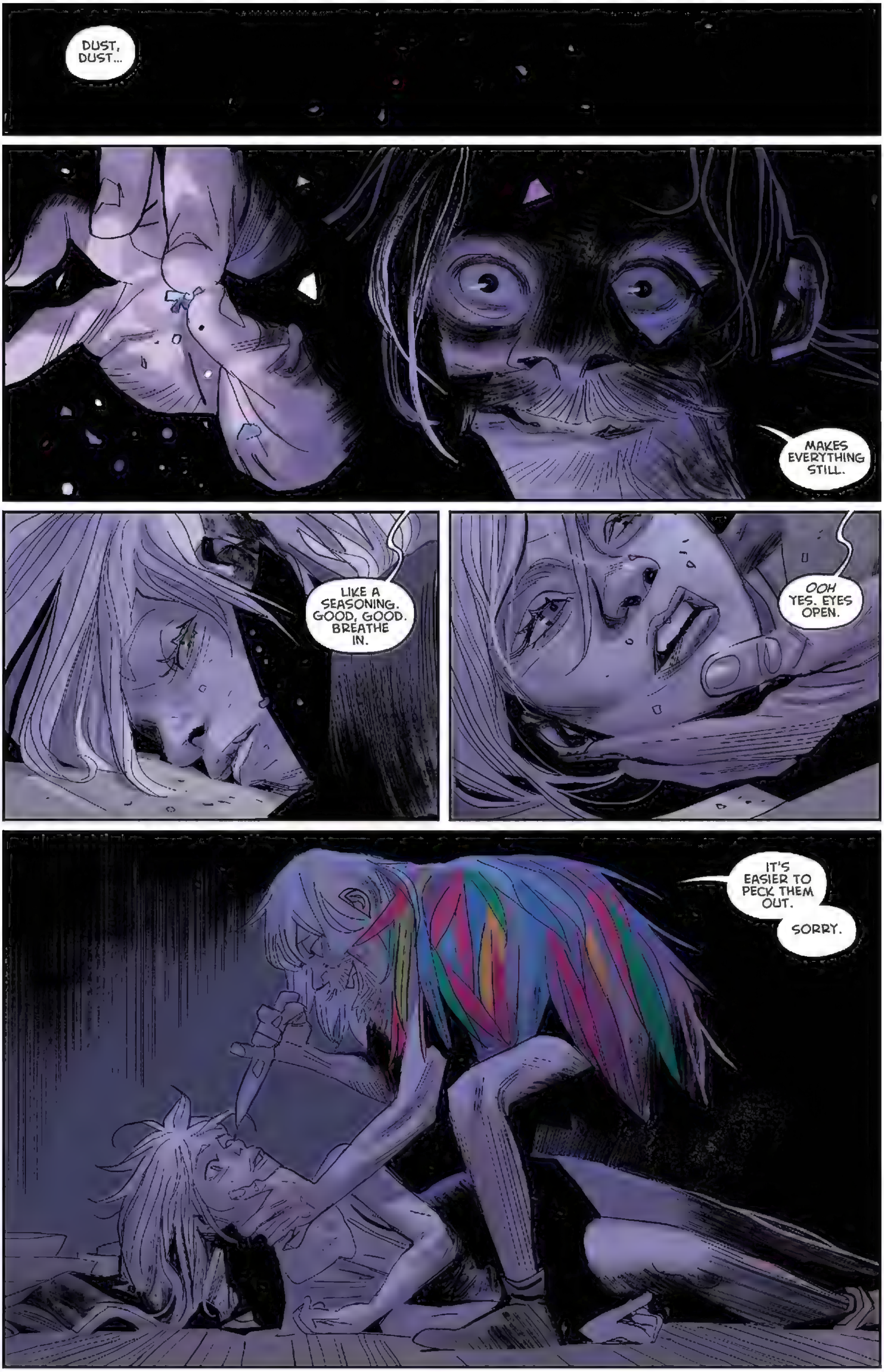

IT WAS... A SURRENDER.
?
HEY! THAT'S MY STUFF.


FLIP
BLACK EGG
FLIP


Her.

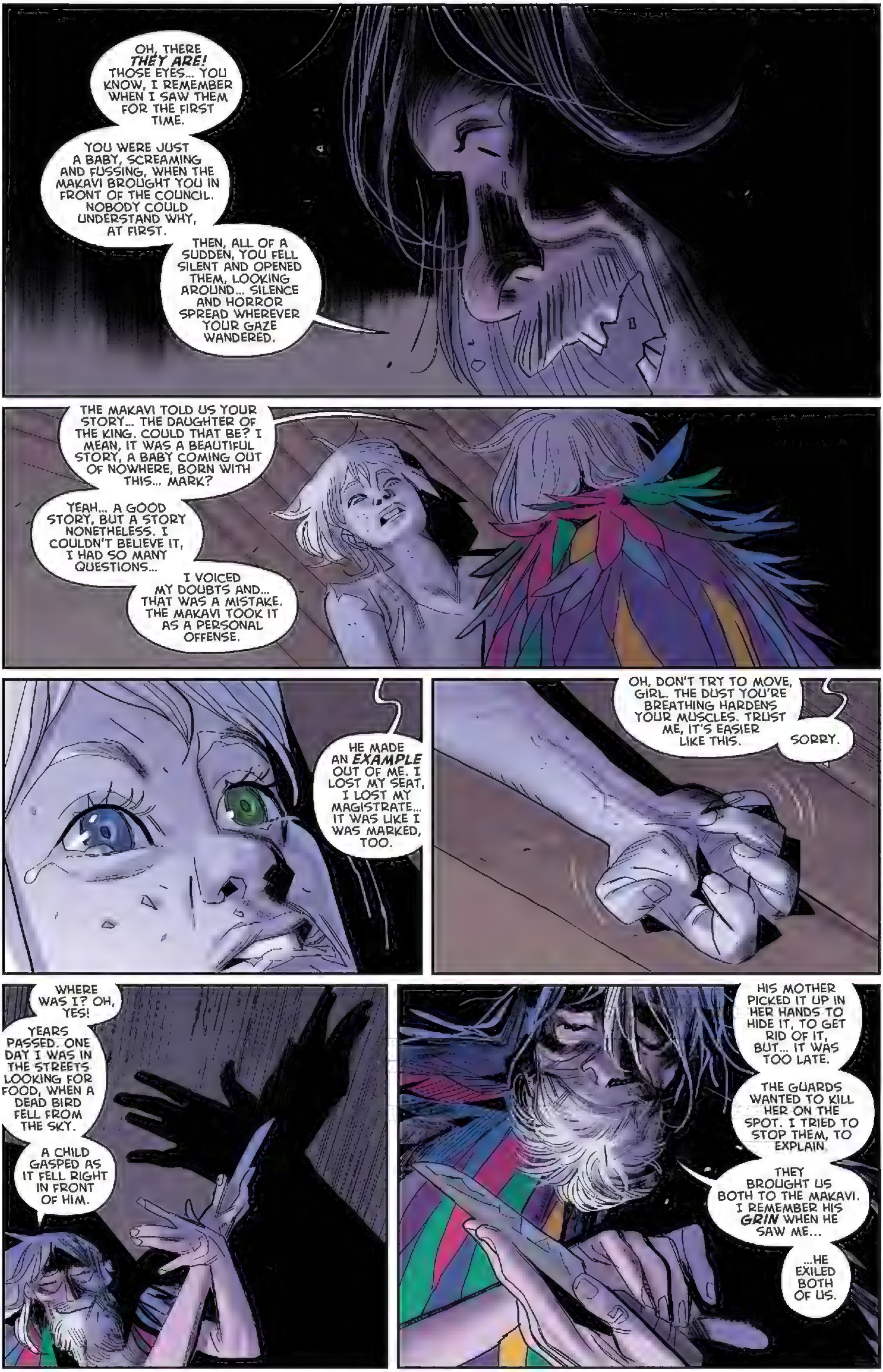


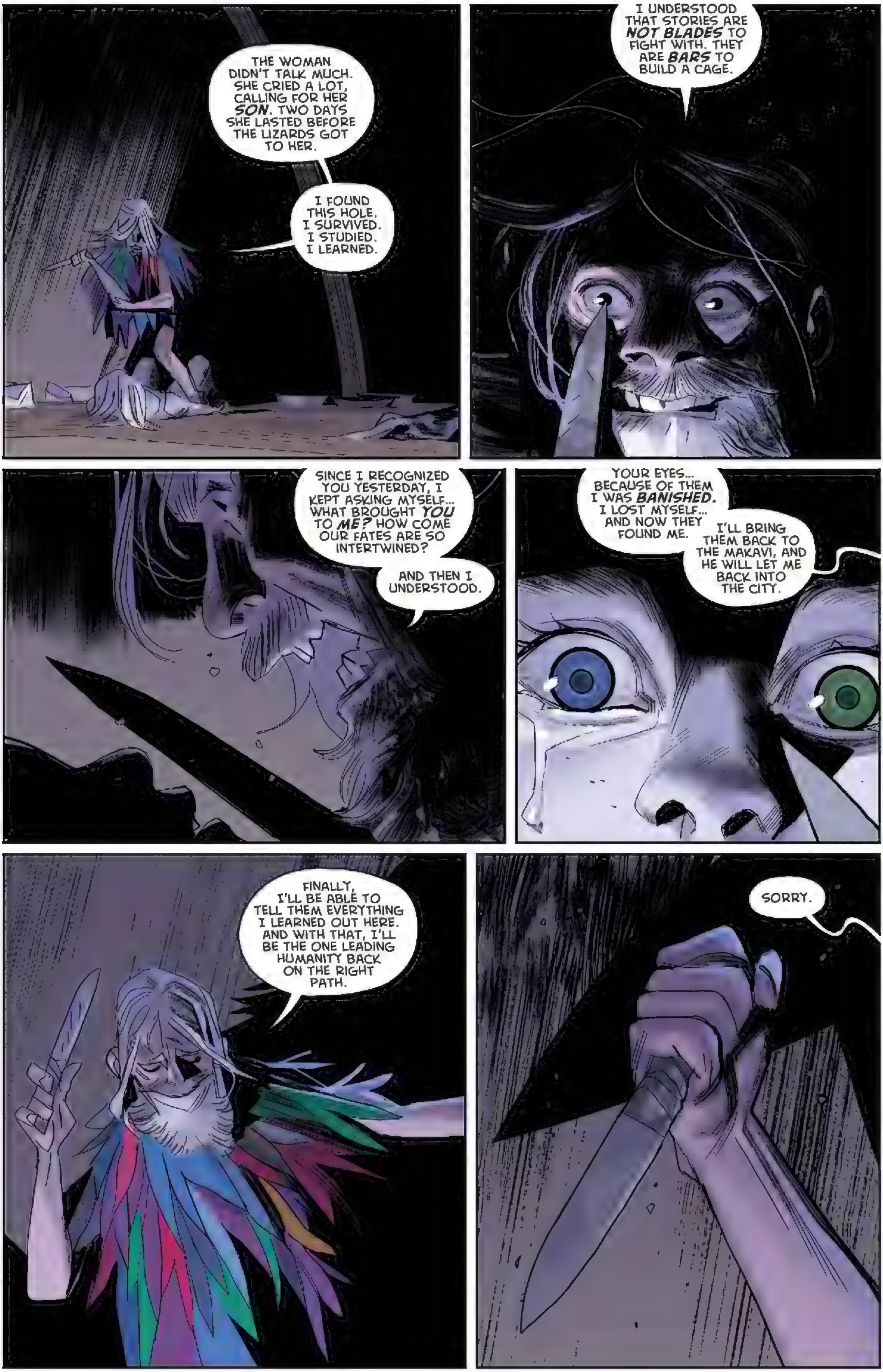


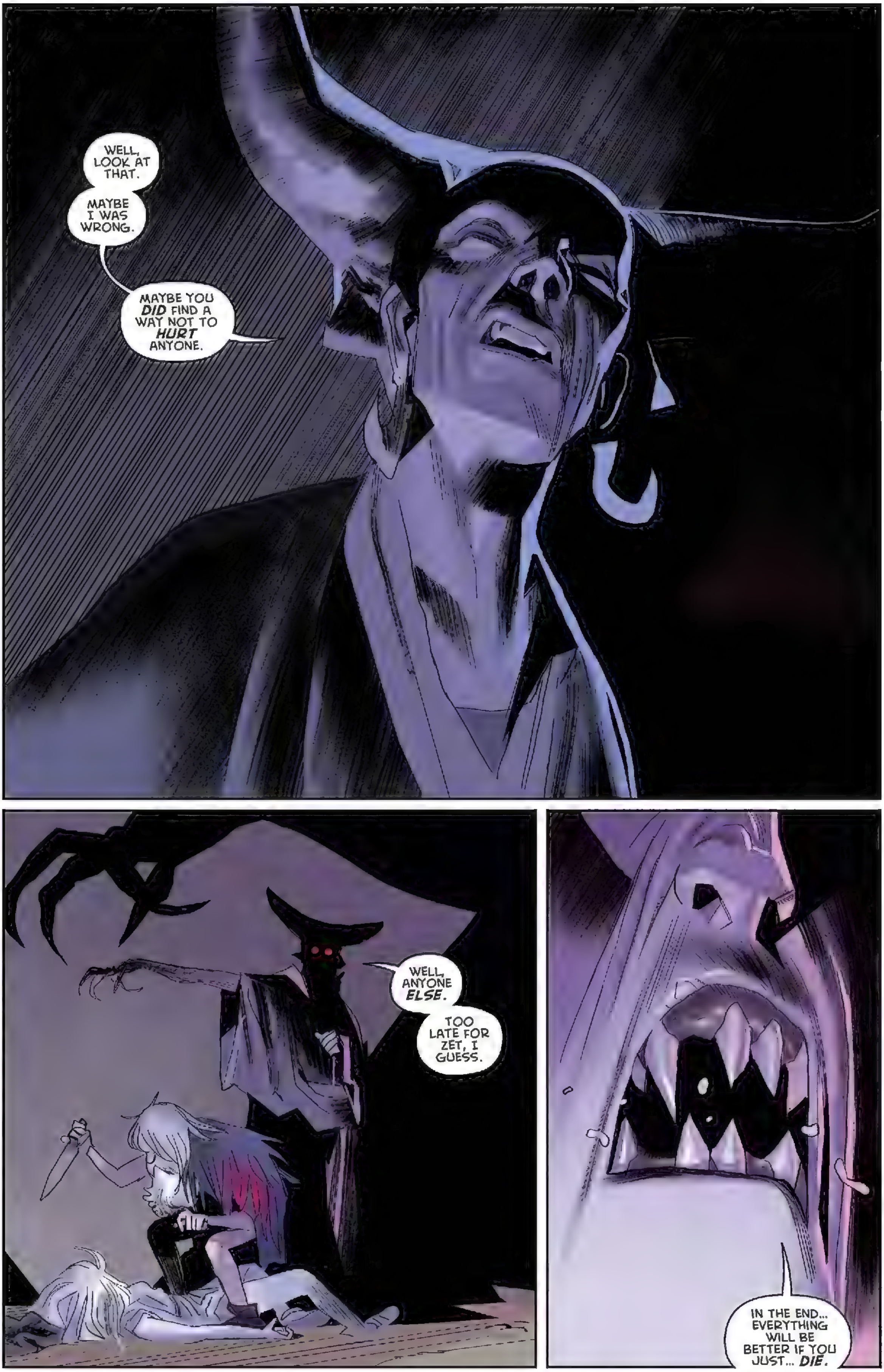

DUST, DUST...
MAKES EVERYTHING STILL.
LIKE A SEASONING. GOOD, GOOD. BREATHE IN.
OOH YES. EYES OPEN.
IT'S EASIER TO PECK THEM OUT.
SORRY.

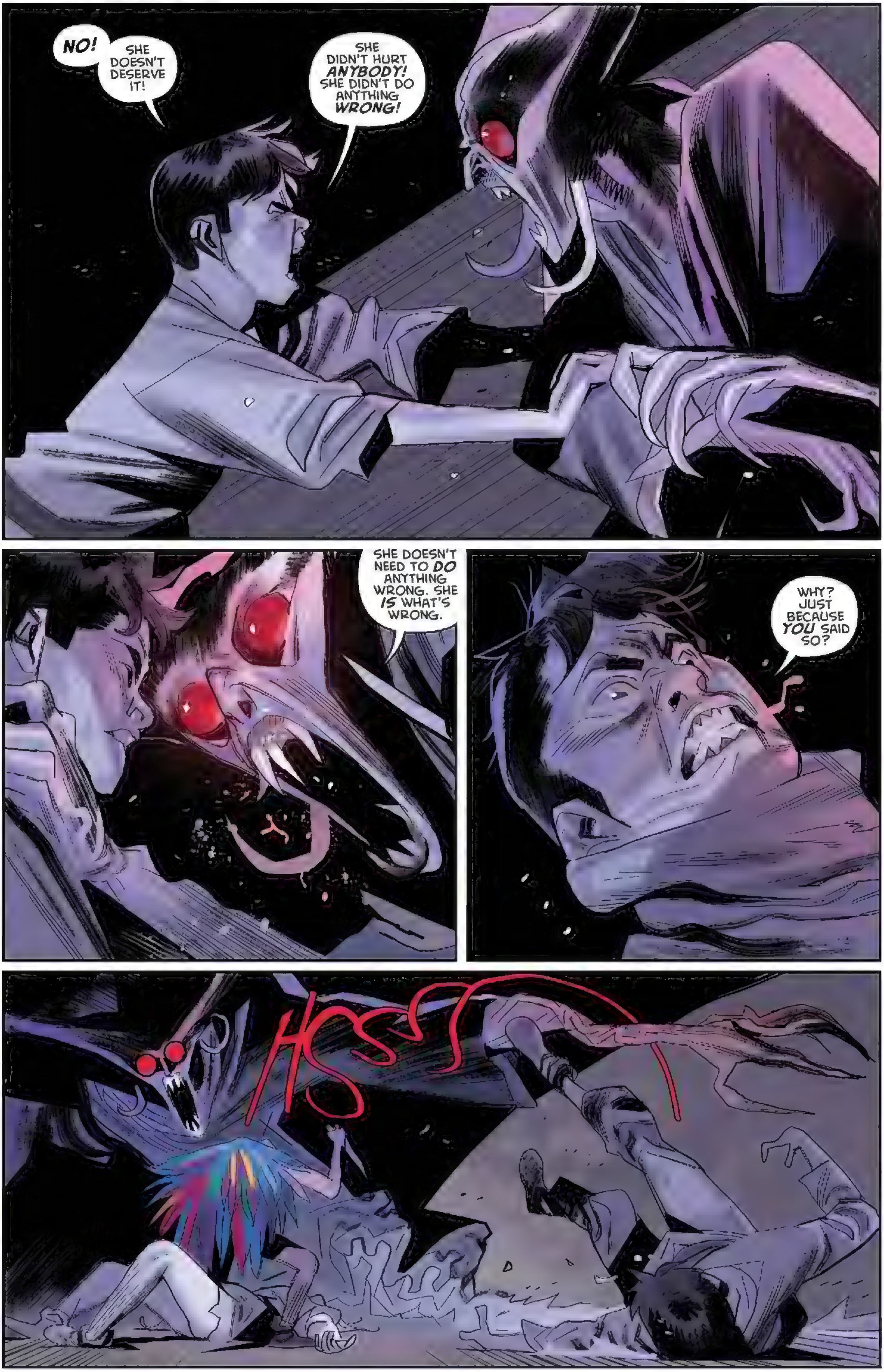
CHAPTER

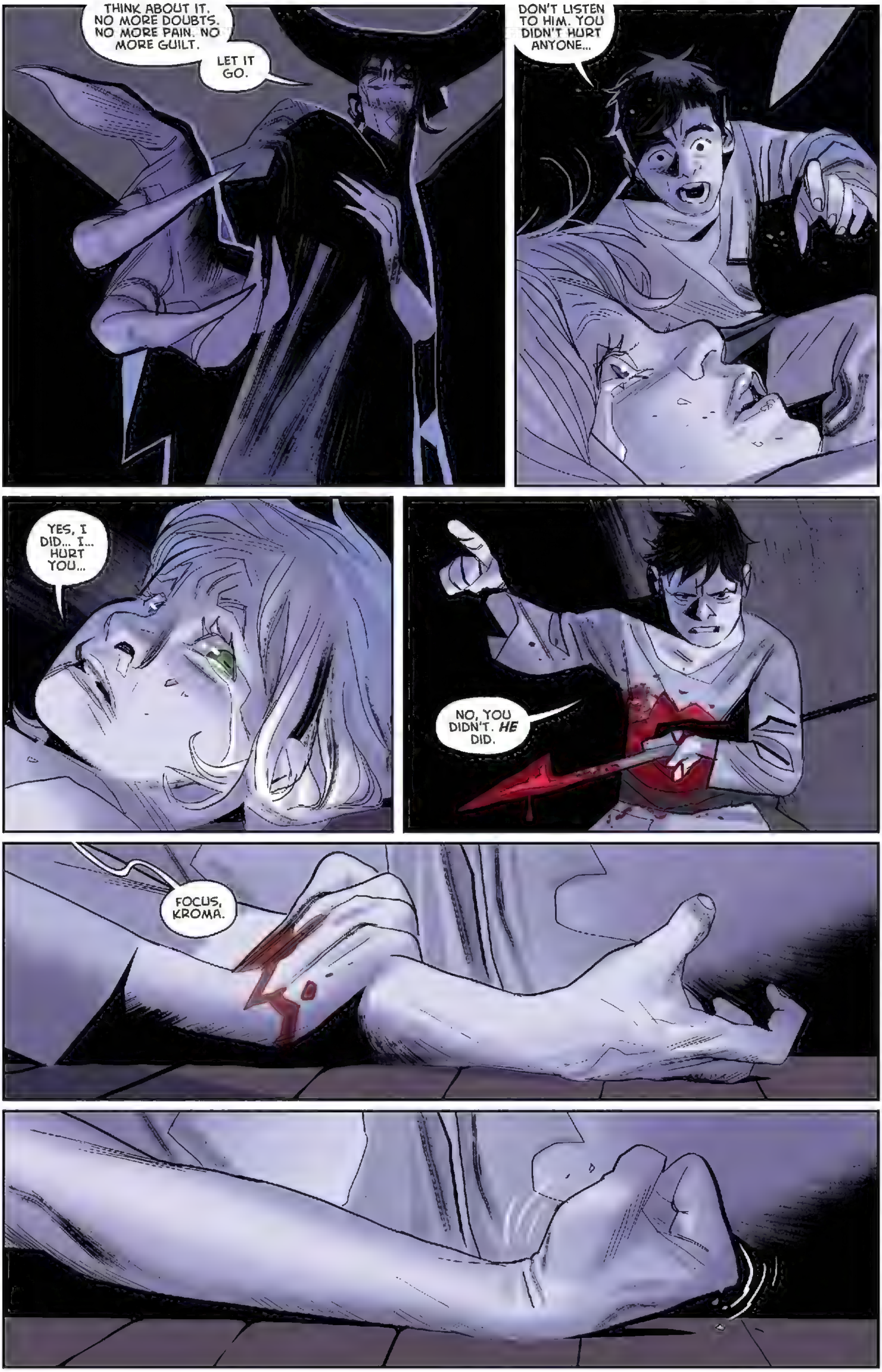
THREE

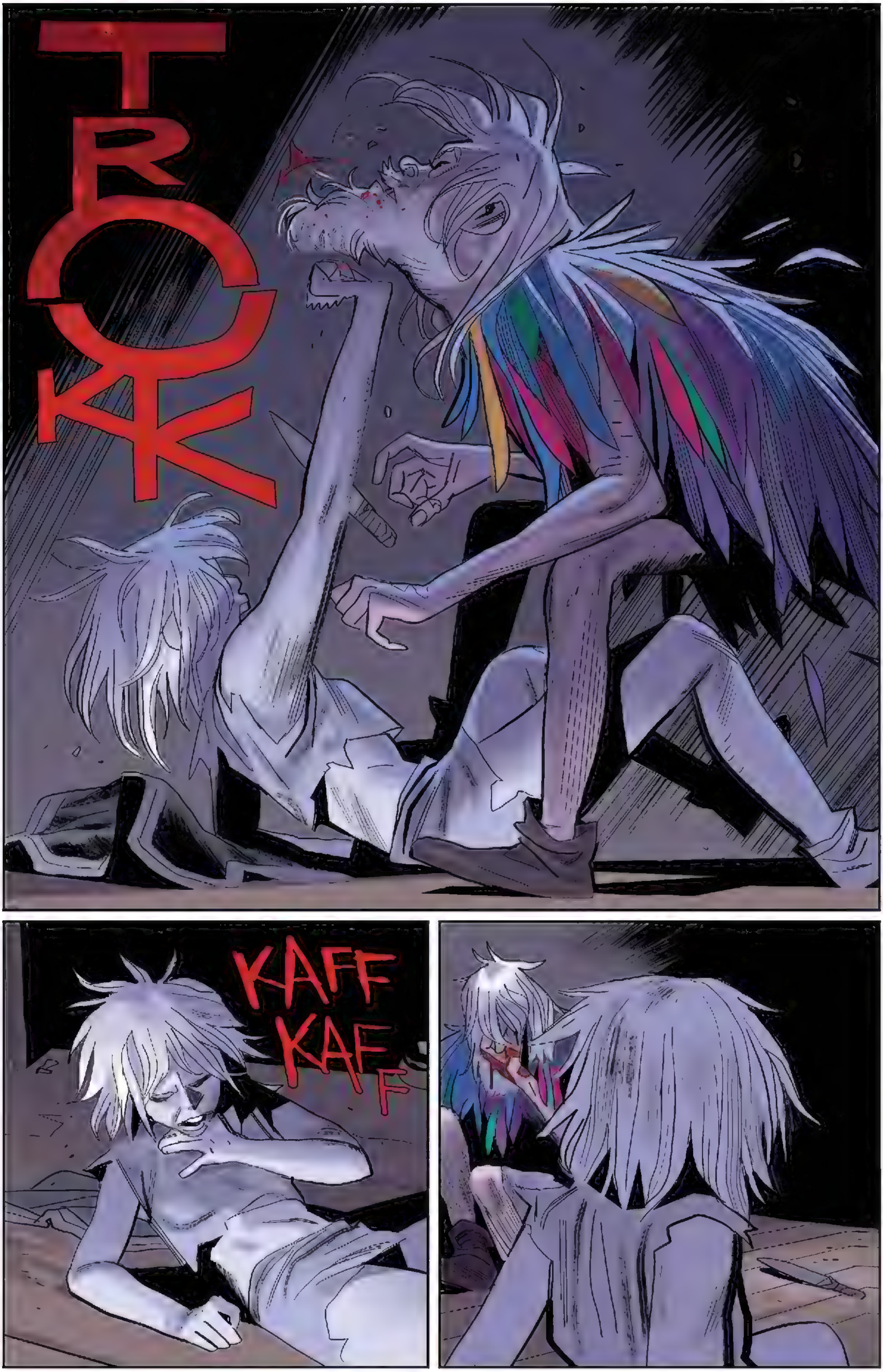

OH, THERE *THEY ARE!* THOSE EYES... YOU KNOW, I REMEMBER WHEN I SAW THEM FOR THE FIRST TIME.
YOU WERE JUST A BABY, SCREAMING AND FUSSING, WHEN THE MAKAVI BROUGHT YOU IN FRONT OF THE COUNCIL. NOBODY COULD UNDERSTAND WHY, AT FIRST.
THEN, ALL OF A SUDDEN, YOU FELL SILENT AND OPENED THEM, LOOKING AROUND... SILENCE AND HORROR SPREAD WHEREVER YOUR GAZE WANDERED.
THE MAKAVI TOLD US YOUR STORY... THE DAUGHTER OF THE KING. COULD THAT BE? I MEAN, IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL STORY, A BABY COMING OUT OF NOWHERE, BORN WITH THIS... MARK?
YEAH... A GOOD STORY, BUT A STORY NONETHELESS. I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT, I HAD SO MANY QUESTIONS...
I VOICED MY DOUBTS AND... THAT WAS A MISTAKE. THE MAKAVI TOOK IT AS A PERSONAL OFFENSE.
HE MADE AN *EXAMPLE* OUT OF ME. I LOST MY SEAT, I LOST MY MAGISTRATE... IT WAS LIKE I WAS MARKED, TOO.
OH, DON'T TRY TO MOVE, GIRL. THE DUST YOU'RE BREATHING HARDENS YOUR MUSCLES. TRUST ME, IT'S EASIER LIKE THIS.
SORRY.
WHERE WAS I? OH, YES!
YEARS PASSED. ONE DAY I WAS IN THE STREETS LOOKING FOR FOOD, WHEN A DEAD BIRD FELL FROM THE SKY.
A CHILD GASPED AS IT FELL RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM.
HIS MOTHER PICKED IT UP IN HER HANDS TO HIDE IT, TO GET RID OF IT, BUT... IT WAS TOO LATE.
THE GUARDS WANTED TO KILL HER ON THE SPOT. I TRIED TO STOP THEM, TO EXPLAIN.
THEY BROUGHT US BOTH TO THE MAKAVI. I REMEMBER HIS *GRIN* WHEN HE SAW ME...
...HE EXILED BOTH OF US.

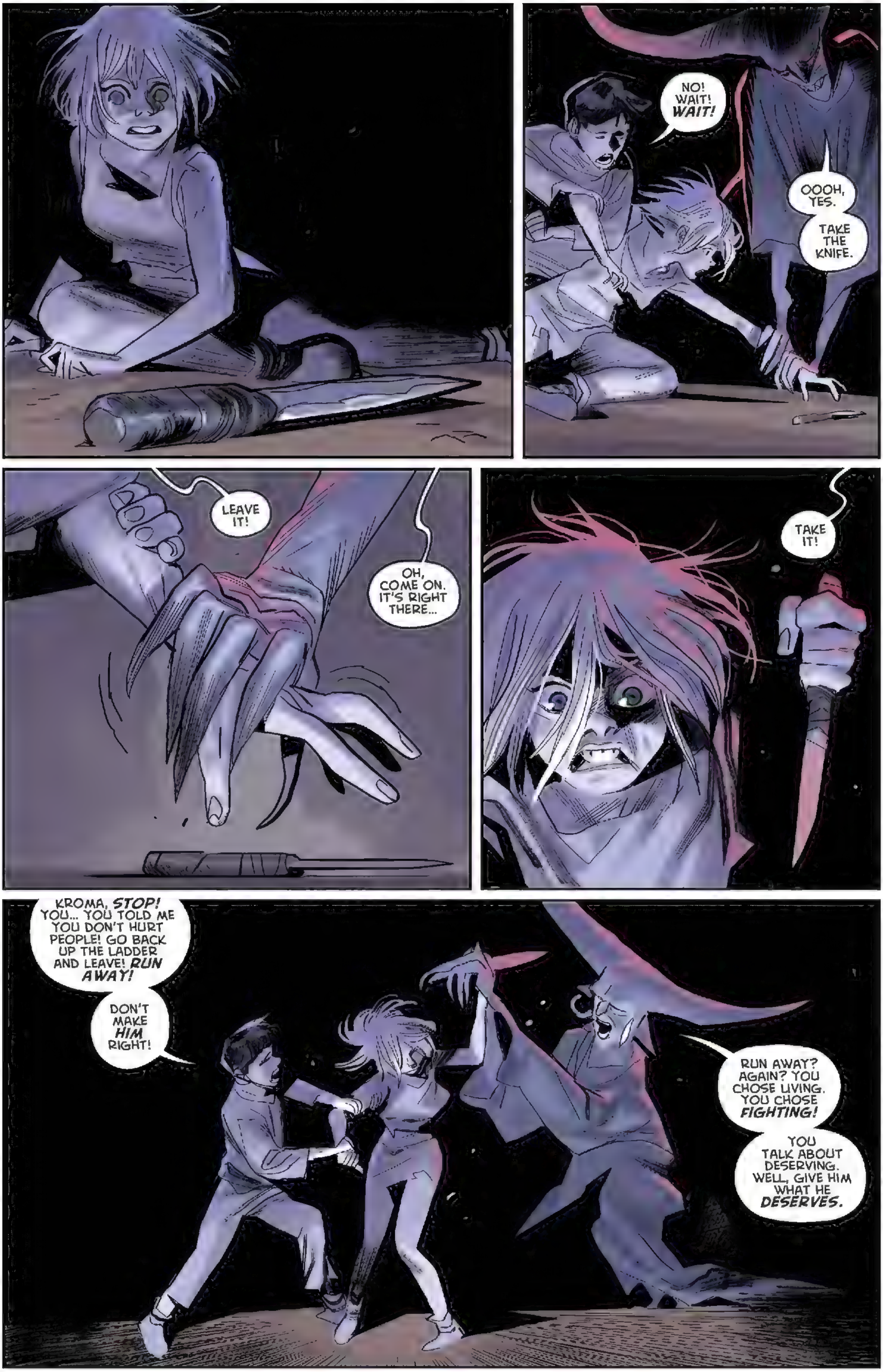

THE WOMAN DIDN'T TALK MUCH. SHE CRIED A LOT, CALLING FOR HER *SON*. TWO DAYS SHE LASTED BEFORE THE LIZARDS GOT TO HER.
I FOUND THIS HOLE. I SURVIVED. I STUDIED. I LEARNED.
I UNDERSTOOD THAT STORIES ARE ***NOT BLADES*** TO FIGHT WITH. THEY ARE ***BARS*** TO BUILD A CAGE.
SINCE I RECOGNIZED YOU YESTERDAY, I KEPT ASKING MYSELF... WHAT BROUGHT *YOU* TO *ME?* HOW COME OUR FATES ARE SO INTERTWINED?
AND THEN I UNDERSTOOD.
YOUR EYES... BECAUSE OF THEM I WAS ***BANISHED.*** I LOST MYSELF... AND NOW THEY FOUND ME.
I'LL BRING THEM BACK TO THE MAKAVI, AND HE WILL LET ME BACK INTO THE CITY.
FINALLY, I'LL BE ABLE TO TELL THEM EVERYTHING I LEARNED OUT HERE. AND WITH THAT, I'LL BE THE ONE LEADING HUMANITY BACK ON THE RIGHT PATH.
SORRY.

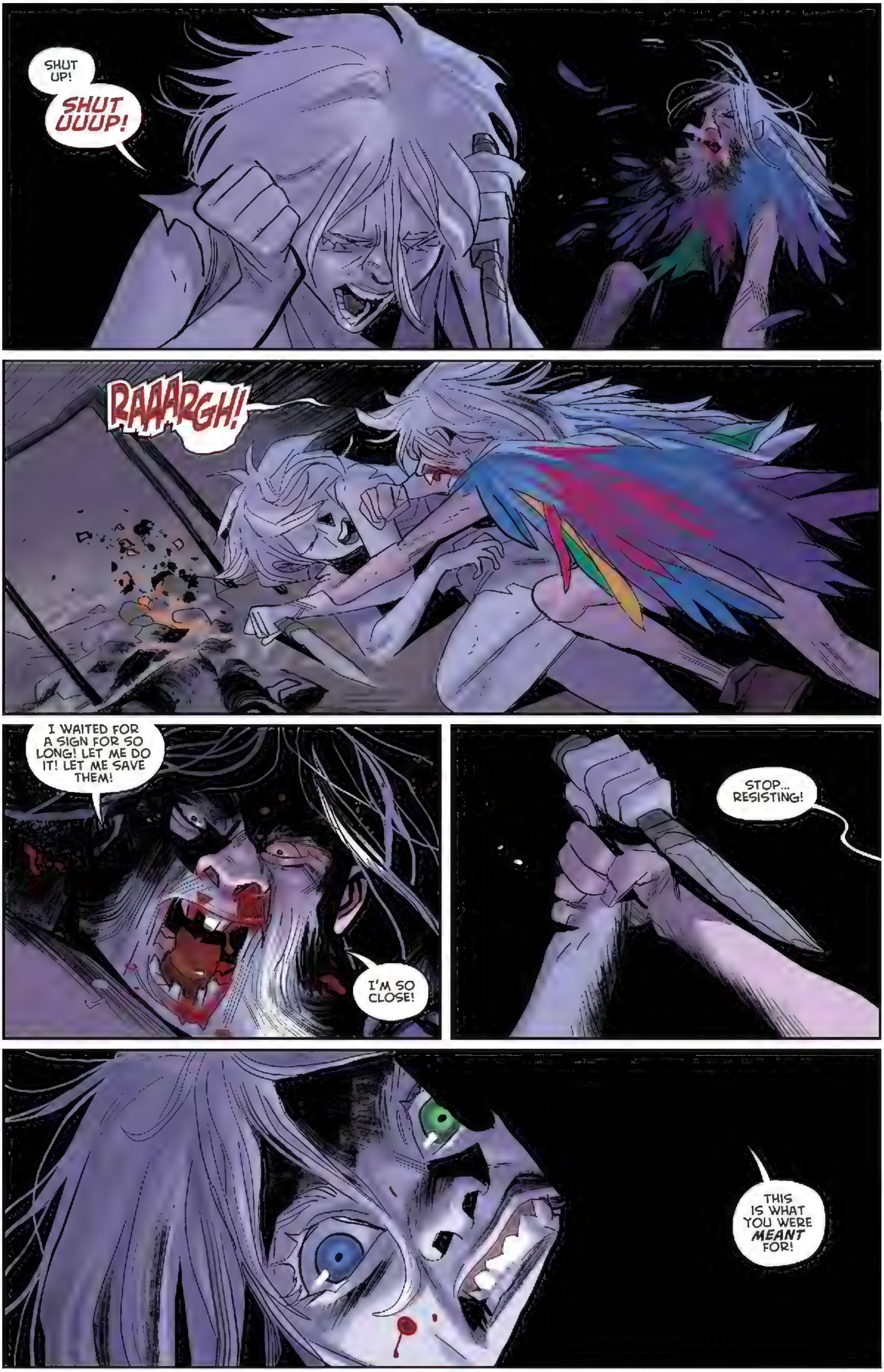

WELL, LOOK AT THAT.
MAYBE I WAS WRONG.
MAYBE YOU *DID* FIND A WAY NOT TO *HURT* ANYONE.
WELL, ANYONE *ELSE*.
TOO LATE FOR ZET, I GUESS.
IN THE END... EVERYTHING WILL BE BETTER IF YOU JUST... *DIE*.

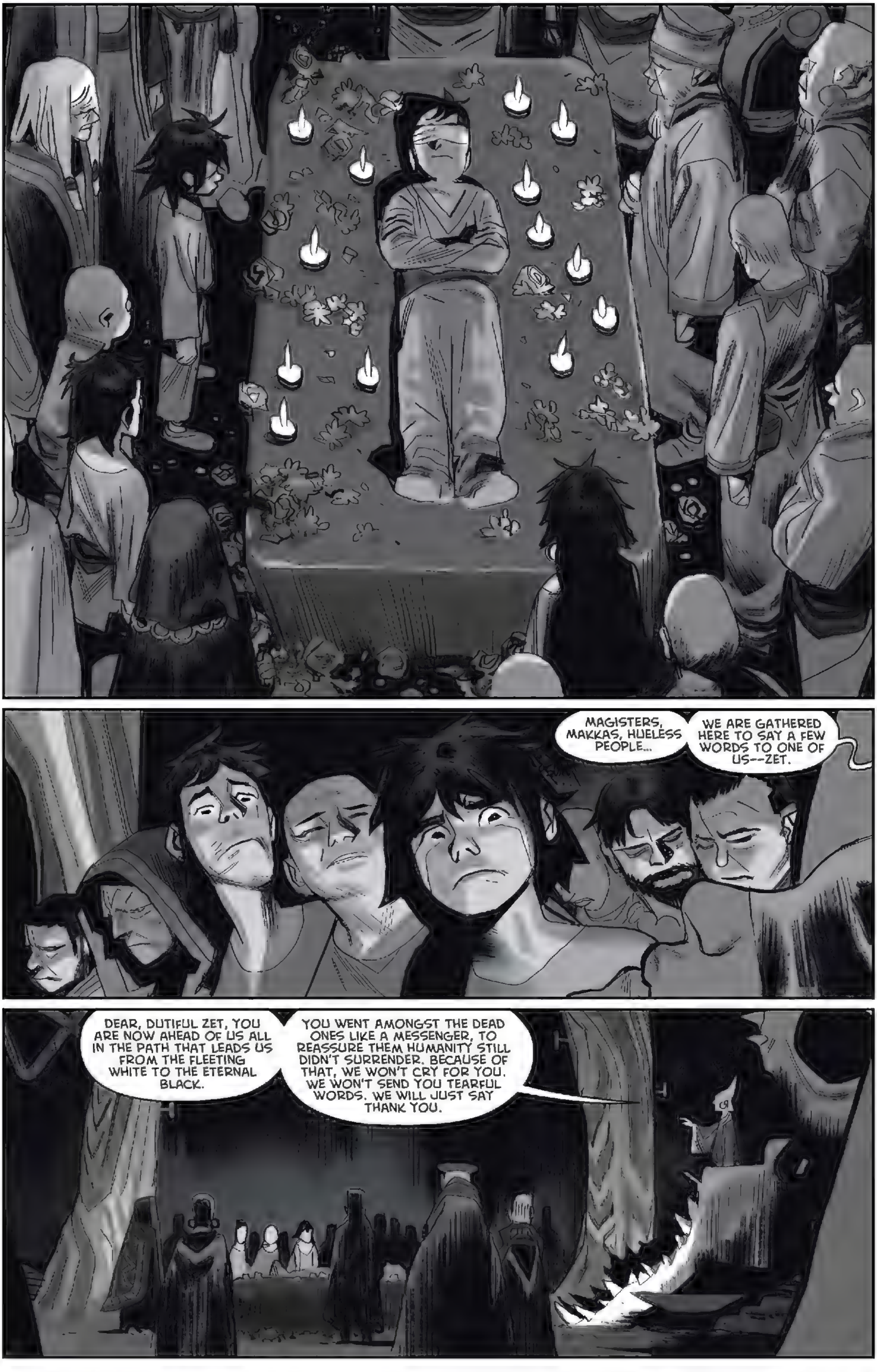

NO!
SHE DOESN'T DESERVE IT!
SHE DIDN'T HURT ***ANYBODY!*** SHE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING ***WRONG!***
SHE DOESN'T NEED TO *DO* ANYTHING WRONG. SHE *IS* WHAT'S WRONG.
WHY? JUST BECAUSE *YOU* SAID SO?
HSSS

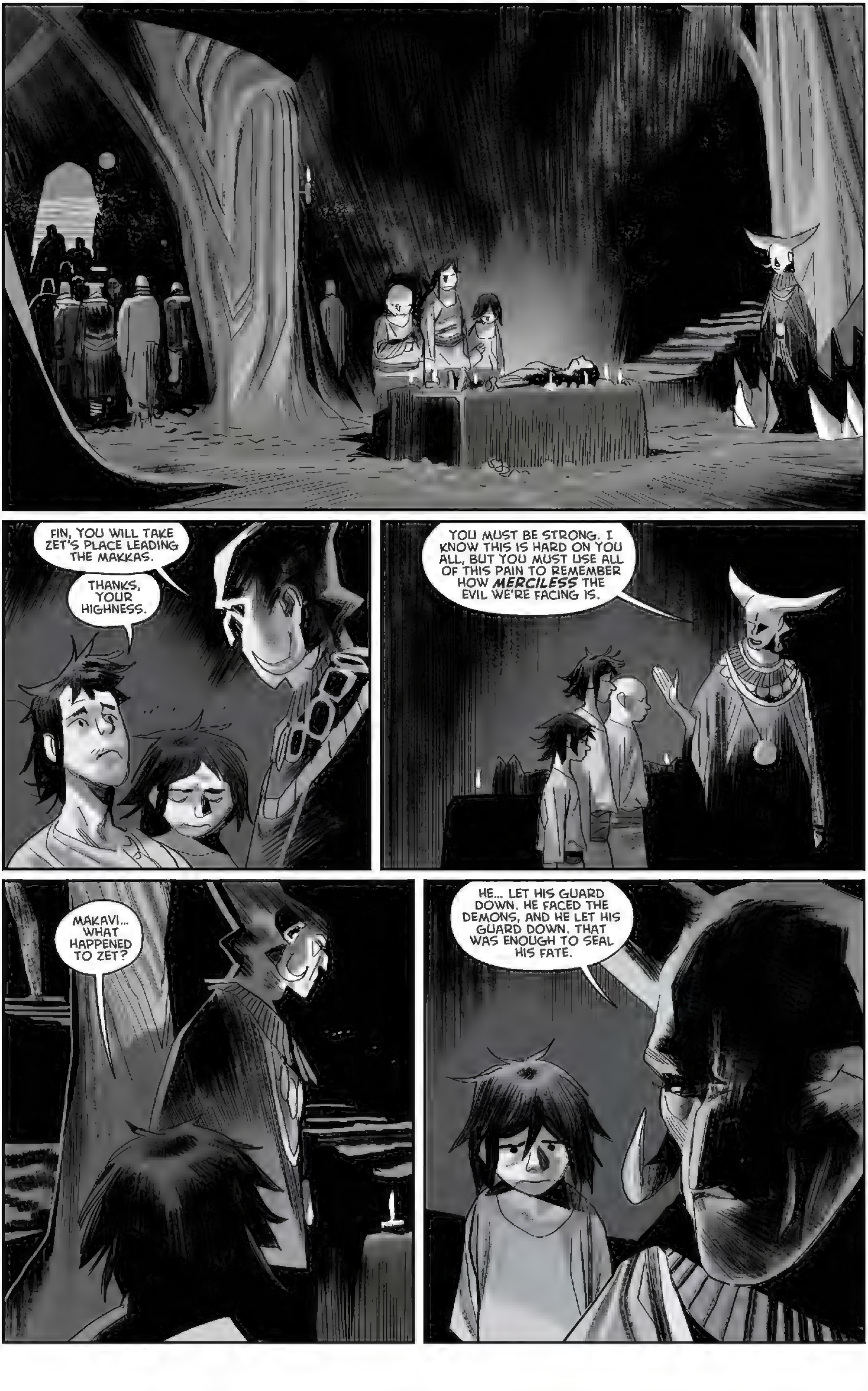

THINK ABOUT IT. NO MORE DOUBTS. NO MORE PAIN. NO MORE GUILT.
LET IT GO.
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM. YOU DIDN'T HURT ANYONE...
YES, I DID... I... HURT YOU...
NO, YOU DIDN'T. *HE* DID.
FOCUS, KROMA.

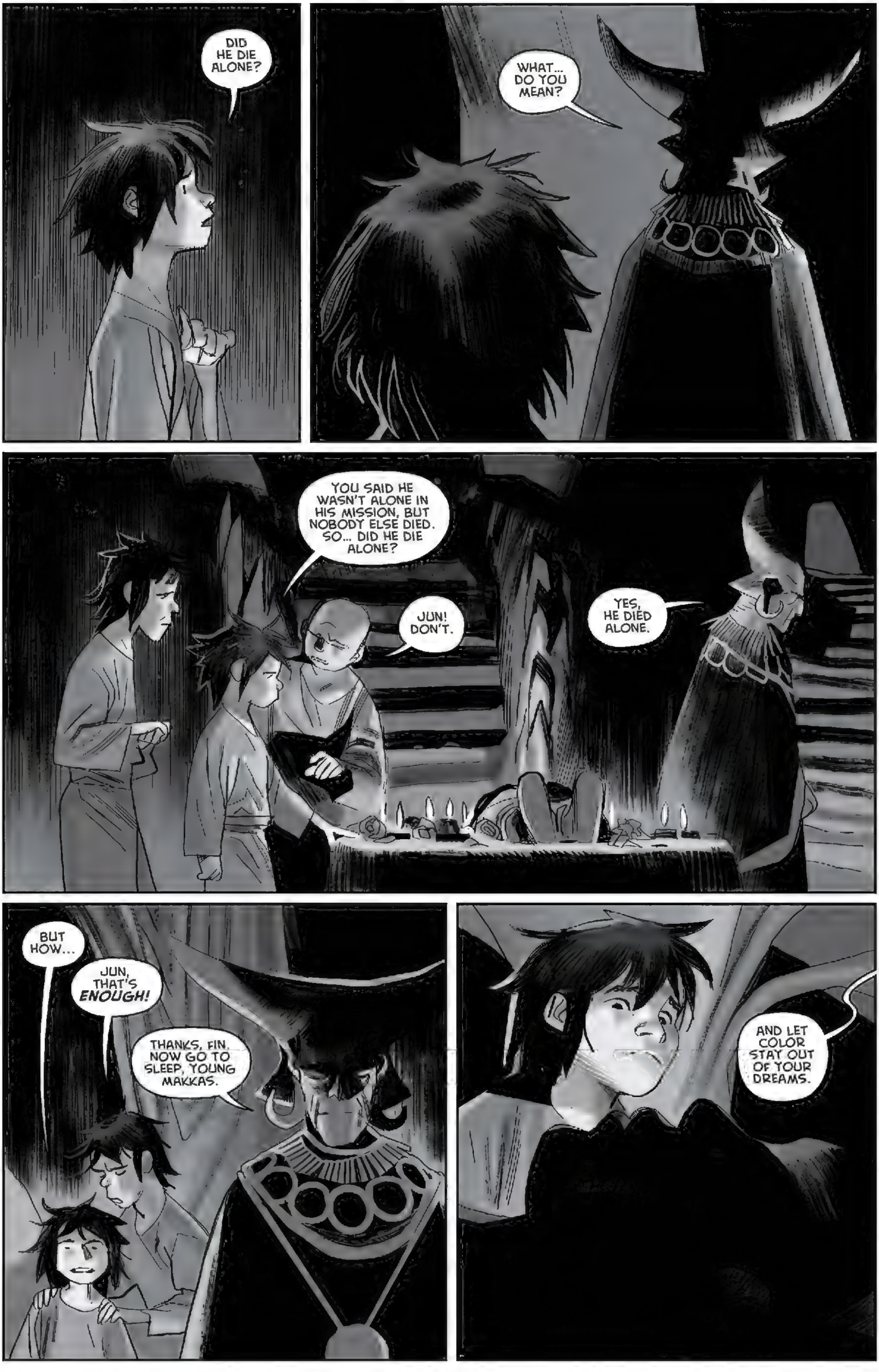

TROCK
KAFF
KAFF

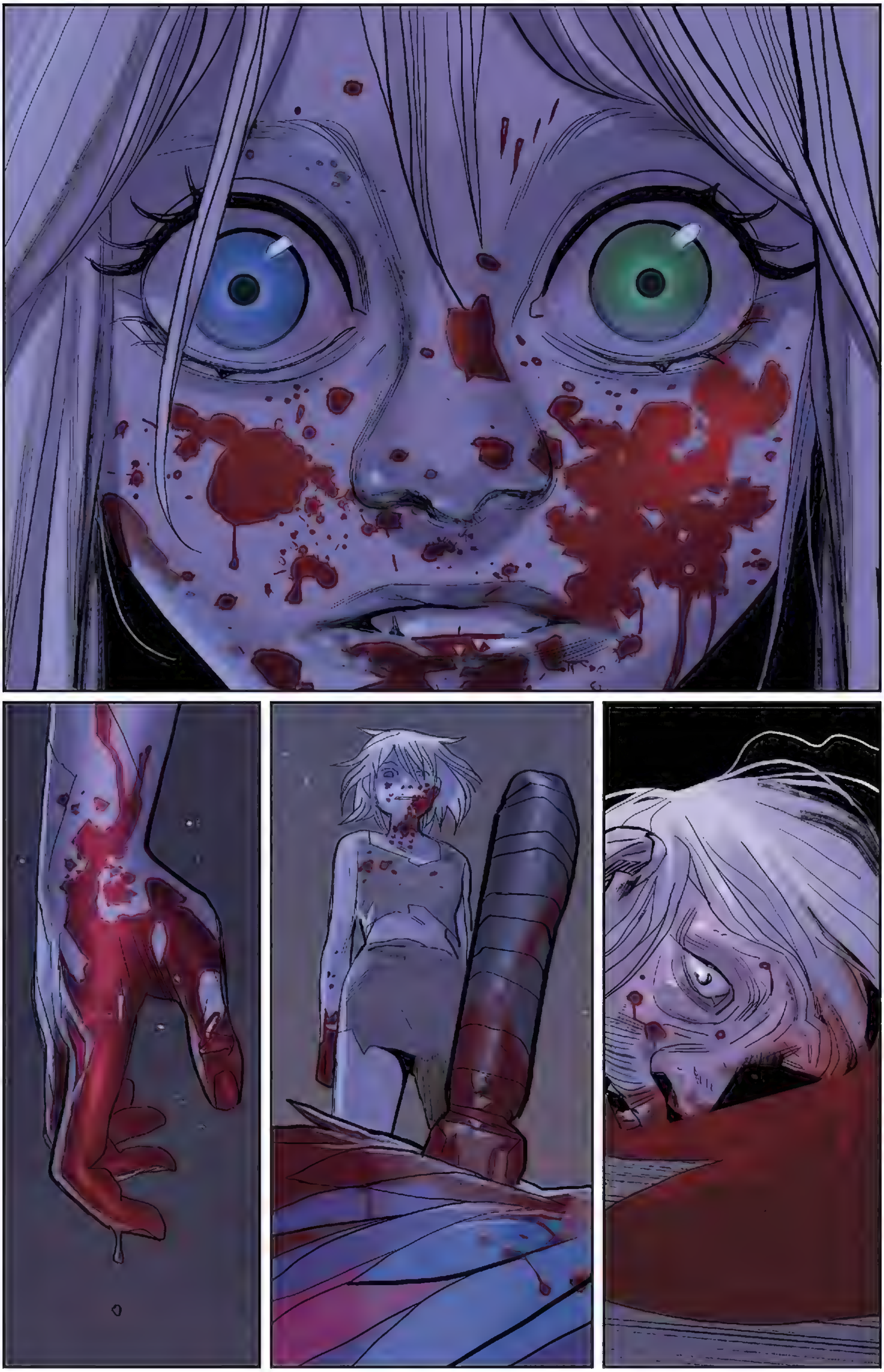

NO! WAIT! ***WAIT!***
OOOH, YES.
TAKE THE KNIFE.
LEAVE IT!
OH, COME ON. IT'S RIGHT THERE...
TAKE IT!
KROMA, ***STOP!*** YOU... YOU TOLD ME YOU DON'T HURT PEOPLE! GO BACK UP THE LADDER AND LEAVE! ***RUN AWAY!***
DON'T MAKE ***HIM*** RIGHT!
RUN AWAY? AGAIN? YOU CHOSE LIVING. YOU CHOSE ***FIGHTING!***
YOU TALK ABOUT DESERVING. WELL, GIVE HIM WHAT HE ***DESERVES.***

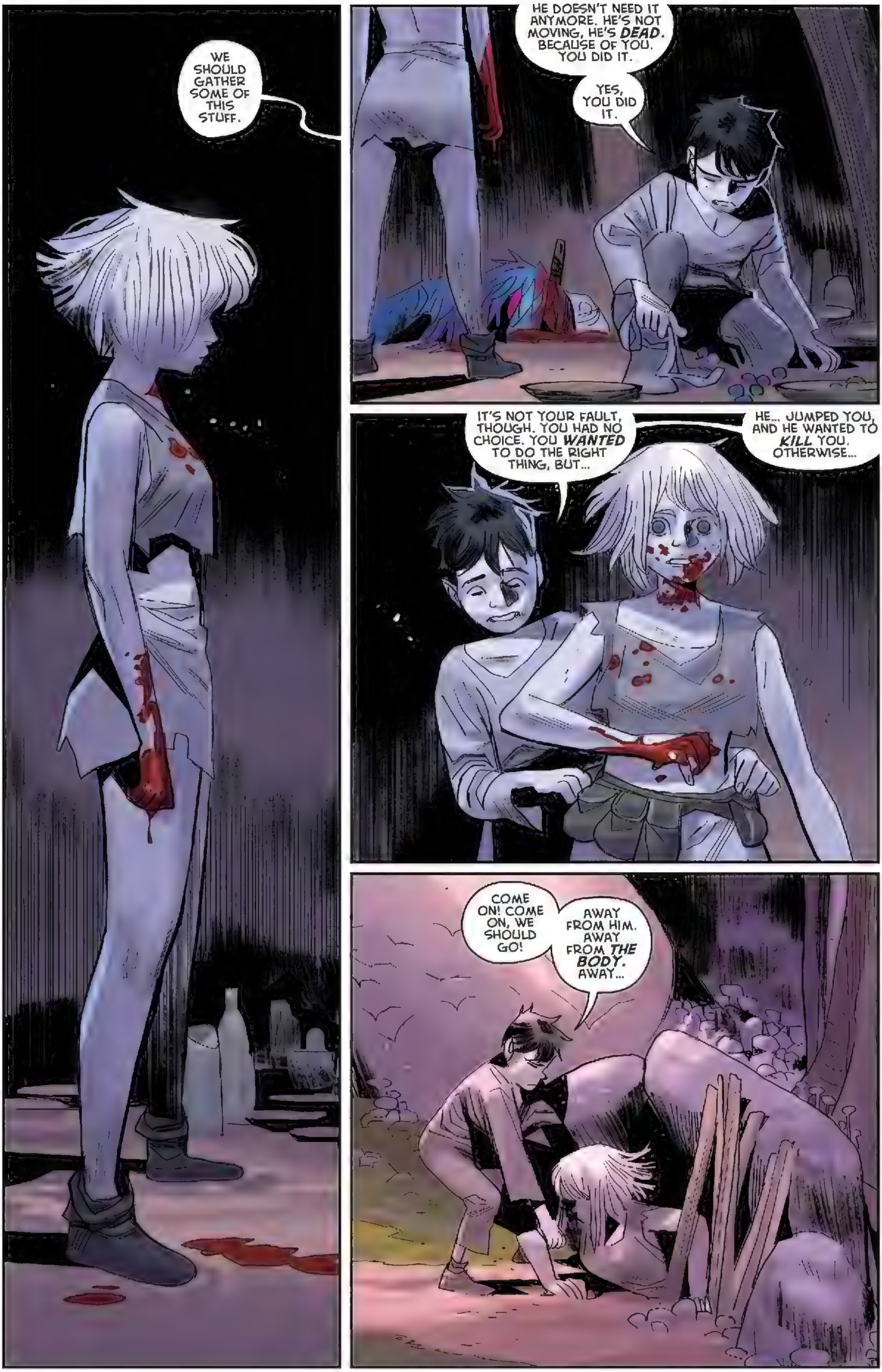

SHUT UP!
SHUT UUUP!
RAAARGH!
I WAITED FOR A SIGN FOR SO LONG! LET ME DO IT! LET ME SAVE THEM!
I'M SO CLOSE!
STOP... RESISTING!
THIS IS WHAT YOU WERE ***MEANT*** FOR!

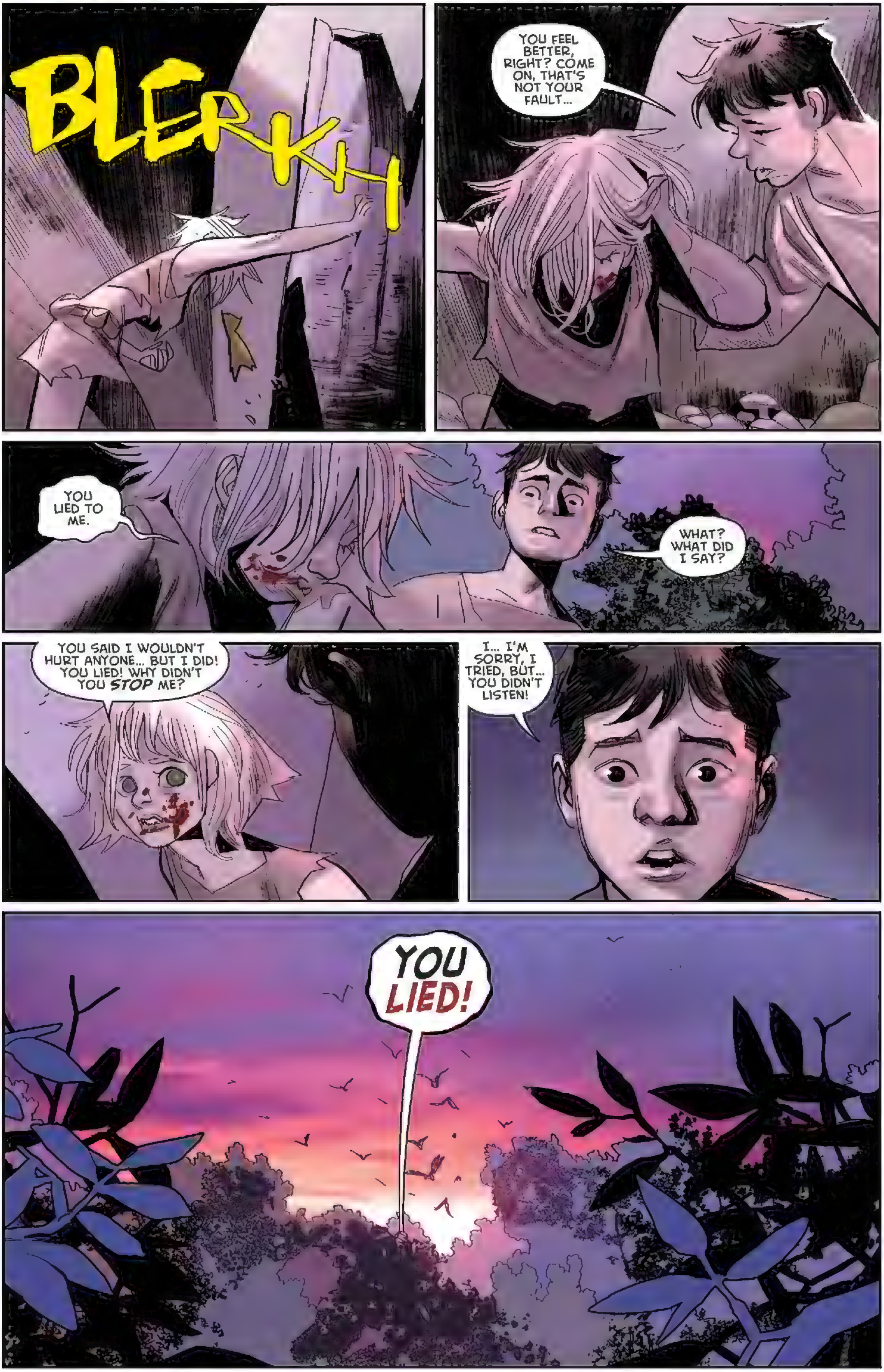

MAGISTERS, MAKKAS, HUELESS PEOPLE...
WE ARE GATHERED HERE TO SAY A FEW WORDS TO ONE OF US--ZET.
DEAR, DUTIFUL ZET, YOU ARE NOW AHEAD OF US ALL IN THE PATH THAT LEADS US FROM THE FLEETING WHITE TO THE ETERNAL BLACK.
YOU WENT AMONGST THE DEAD ONES LIKE A MESSENGER, TO REASSURE THEM HUMANITY STILL DIDN'T SURRENDER. BECAUSE OF THAT, WE WON'T CRY FOR YOU. WE WON'T SEND YOU TEARFUL WORDS. WE WILL JUST SAY THANK YOU.

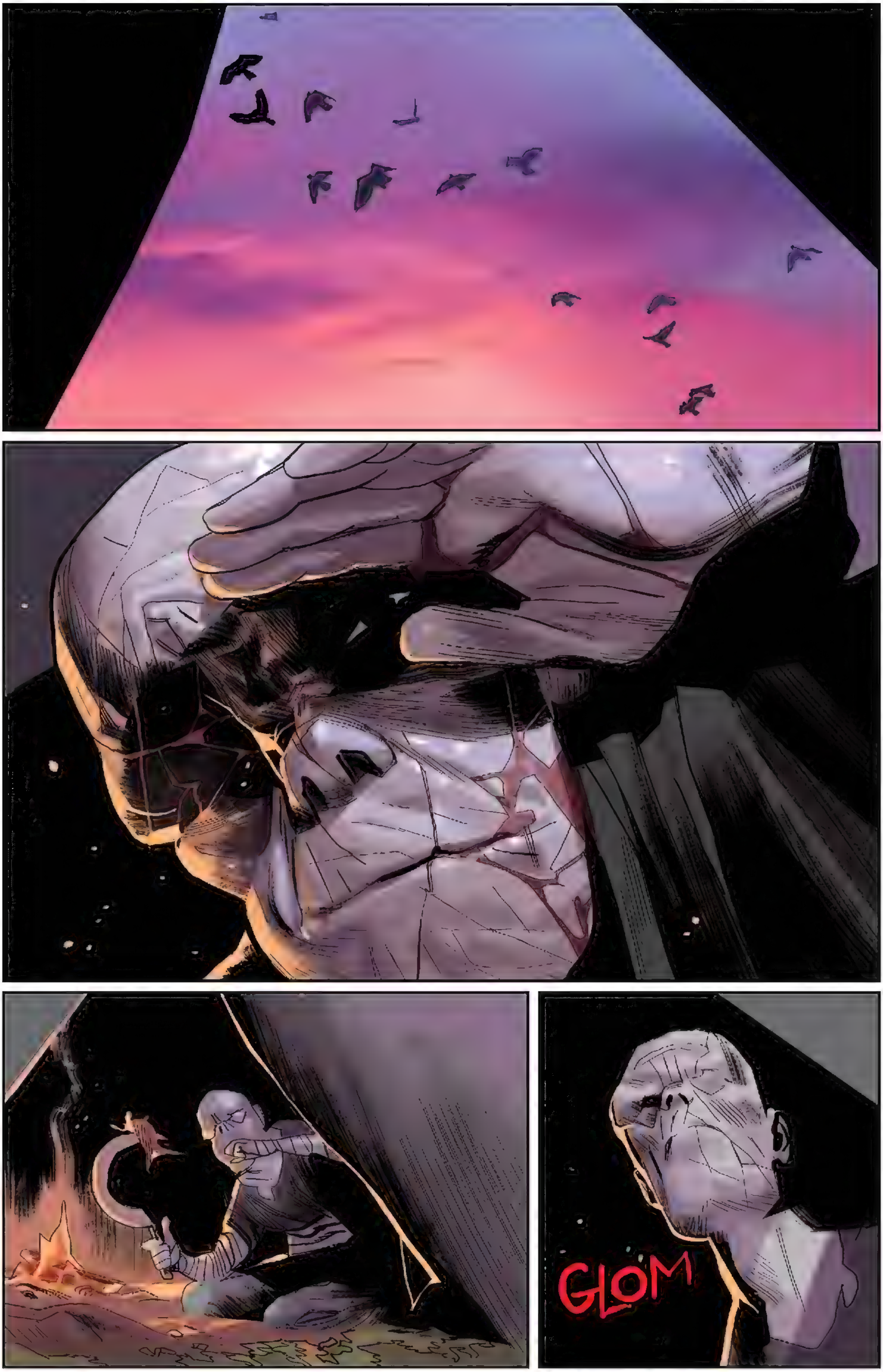

FIN, YOU WILL TAKE ZET'S PLACE LEADING THE MAKKAS.
THANKS, YOUR HIGHNESS.
...
YOU MUST BE STRONG. I KNOW THIS IS HARD ON YOU ALL, BUT YOU MUST USE ALL OF THIS PAIN TO REMEMBER HOW *MERCILESS* THE EVIL WE'RE FACING IS.
MAKAVI... WHAT HAPPENED TO ZET?
HE... LET HIS GUARD DOWN. HE FACED THE DEMONS, AND HE LET HIS GUARD DOWN. THAT WAS ENOUGH TO SEAL HIS FATE.

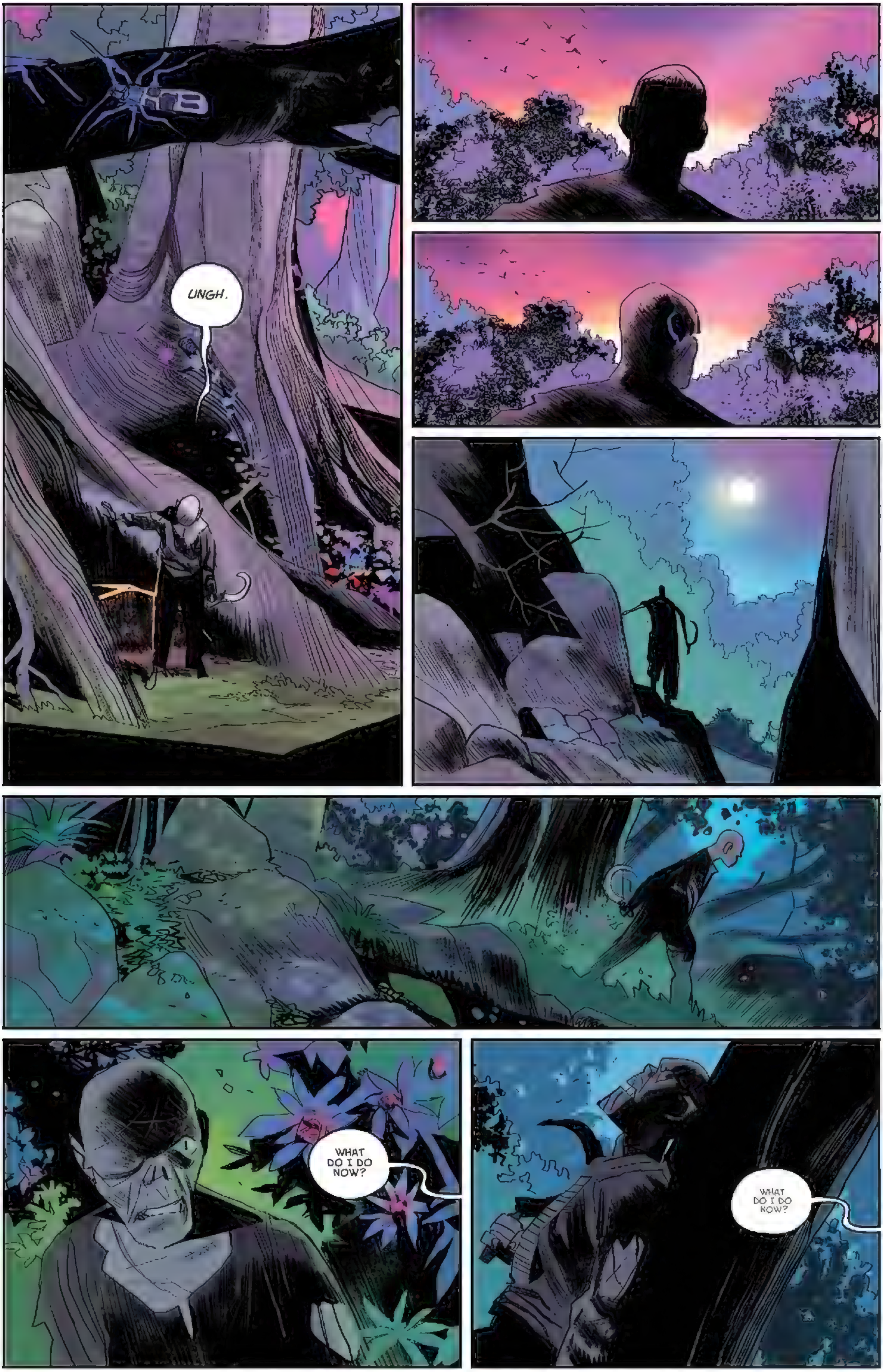

DID HE DIE ALONE?
WHAT... DO YOU MEAN?
YOU SAID HE WASN'T ALONE IN HIS MISSION, BUT NOBODY ELSE DIED. SO... DID HE DIE ALONE?
JUN! DON'T.
YES, HE DIED ALONE.
BUT HOW...
JUN, THAT'S *ENOUGH!*
THANKS, FIN. NOW GO TO SLEEP, YOUNG MAKKAS.
AND LET COLOR STAY OUT OF YOUR DREAMS.

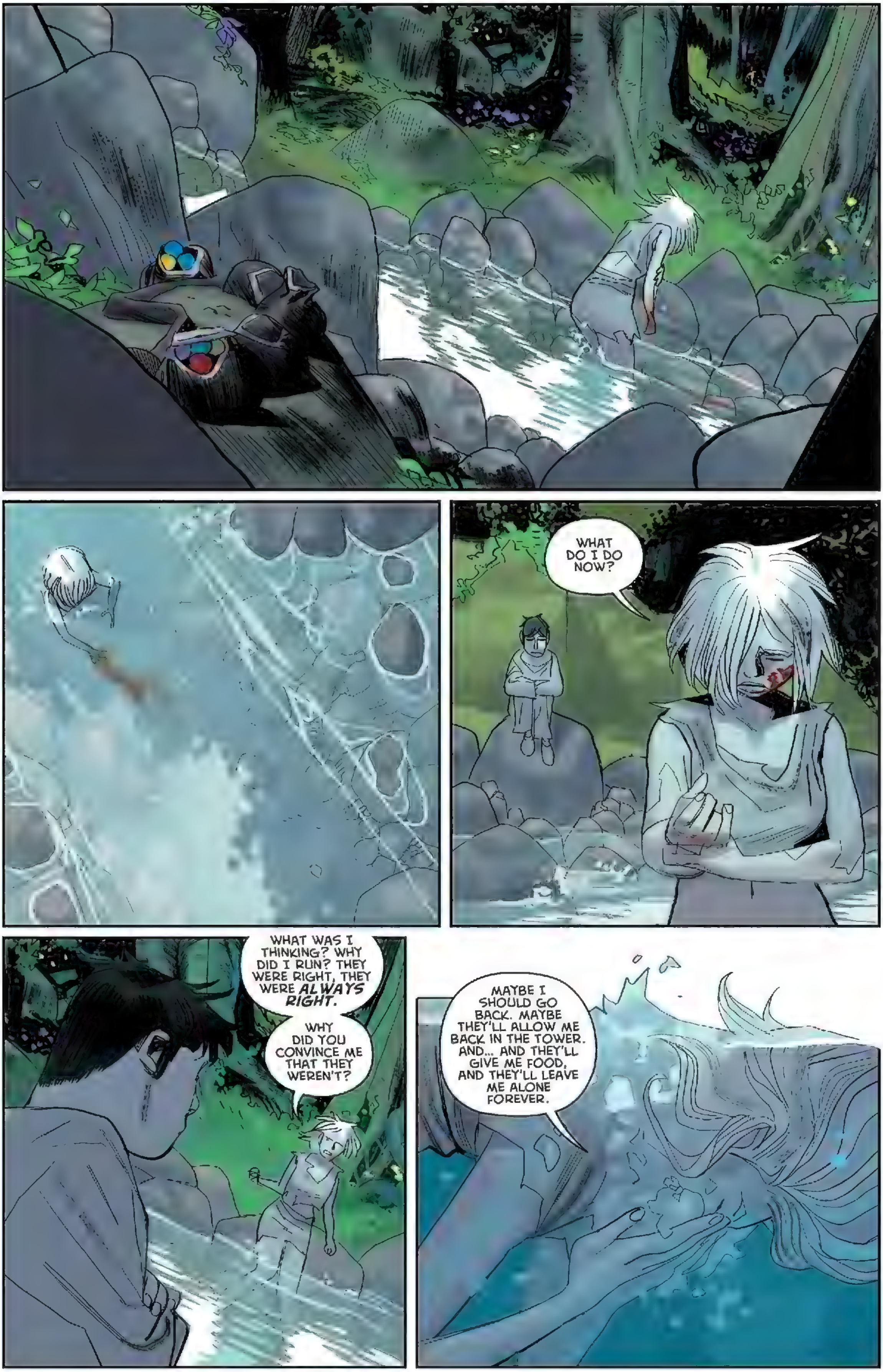


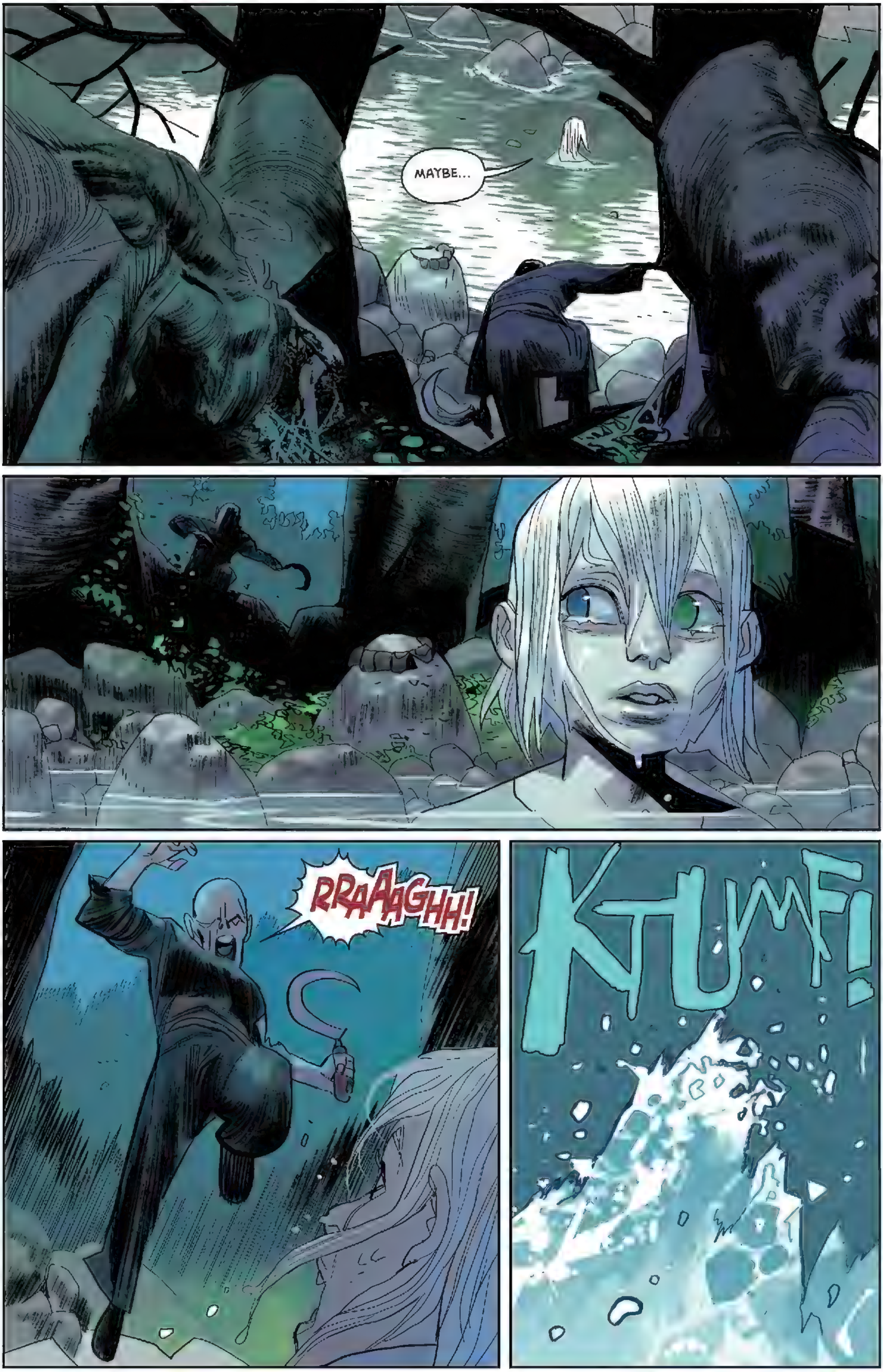

WE SHOULD GATHER SOME OF THIS STUFF.
HE DOESN'T NEED IT ANYMORE. HE'S NOT MOVING, HE'S **DEAD.** BECAUSE OF YOU. YOU DID IT.
YES, YOU DID IT.
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, THOUGH. YOU HAD NO CHOICE. YOU ***WANTED*** TO DO THE RIGHT THING, BUT...
HE... JUMPED YOU, AND HE WANTED TO ***KILL*** YOU. OTHERWISE...
COME ON! COME ON, WE SHOULD GO!
AWAY FROM HIM. AWAY FROM ***THE BODY.*** AWAY...

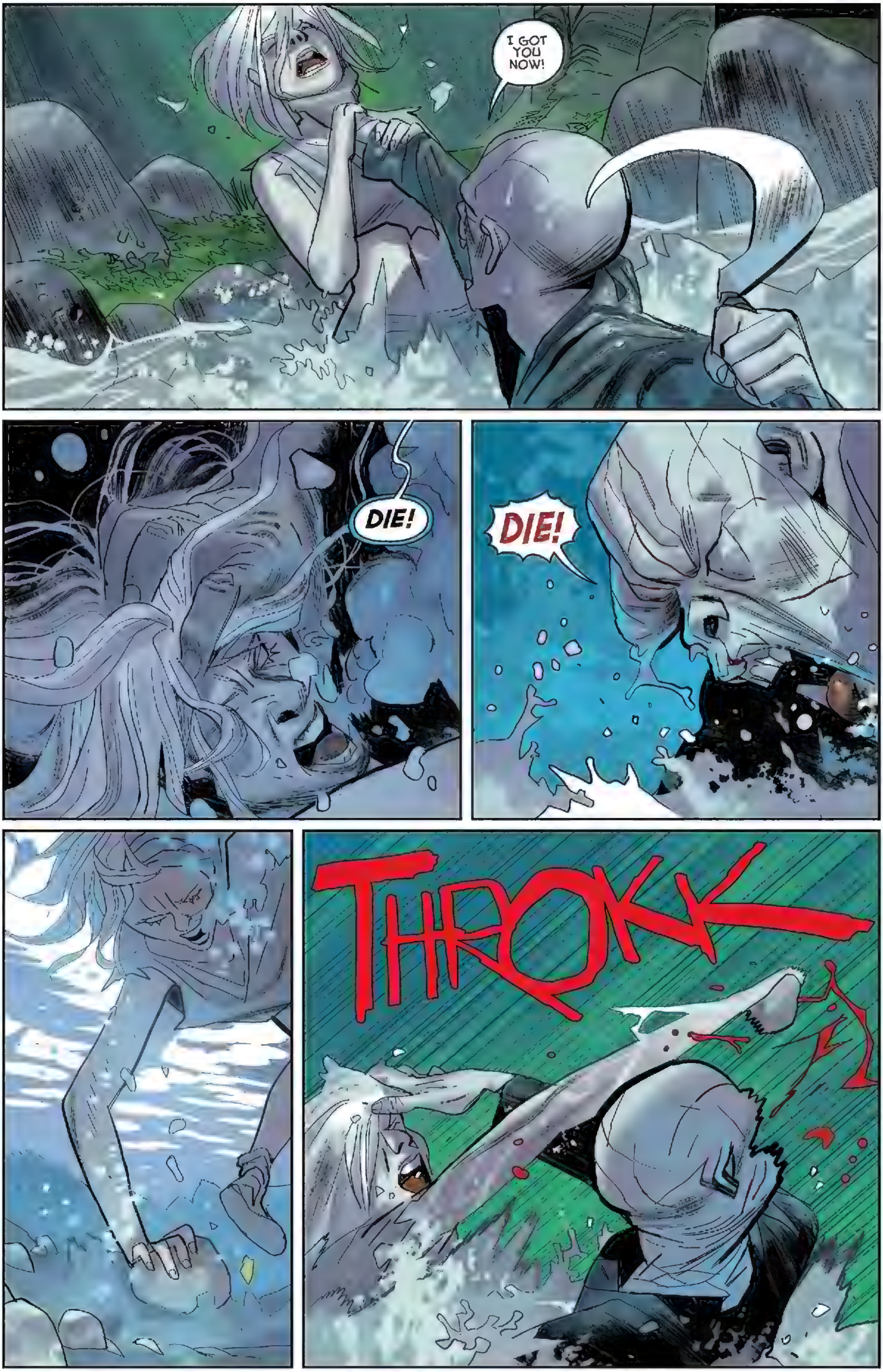

BLERKH
YOU FEEL BETTER, RIGHT? COME ON, THAT'S NOT YOUR FAULT...
YOU LIED TO ME.
WHAT? WHAT DID I SAY?
YOU SAID I WOULDN'T HURT ANYONE... BUT I DID! YOU LIED! WHY DIDN'T YOU *STOP* ME?
I... I'M SORRY, I TRIED, BUT... YOU DIDN'T LISTEN!
YOU LIED!

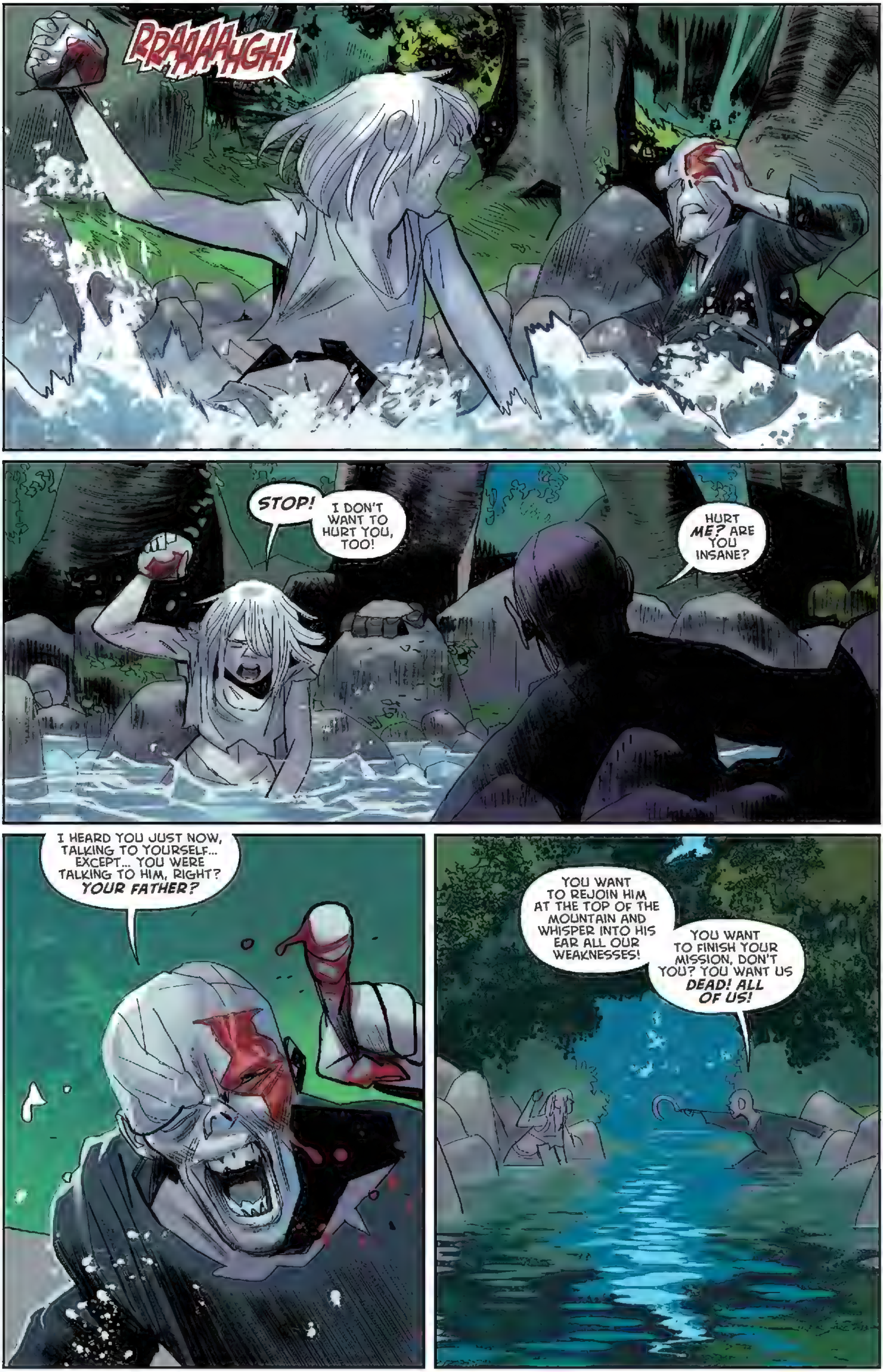

GLOM

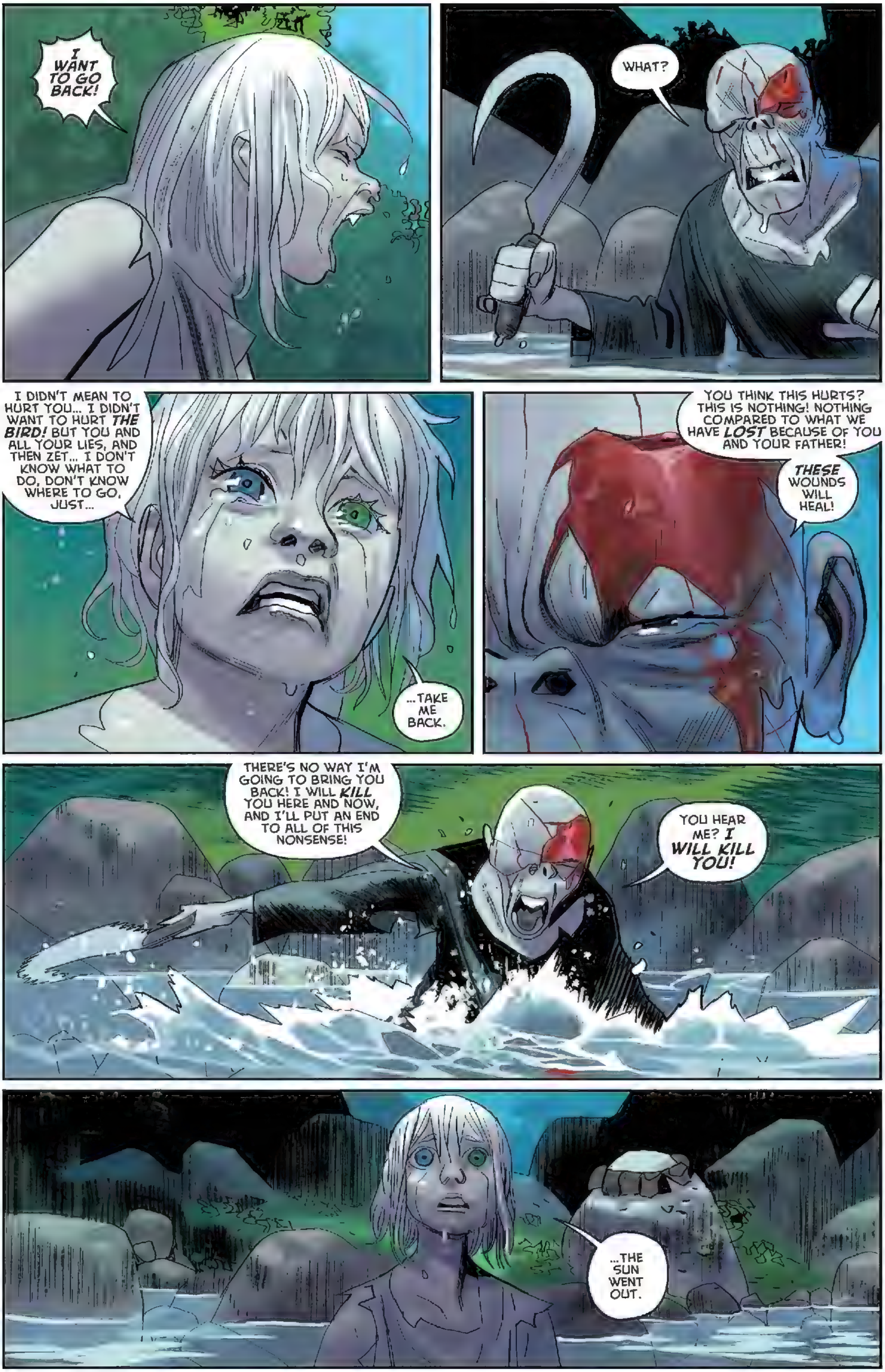

UNGH.
WHAT DO I DO NOW?
WHAT DO I DO NOW?

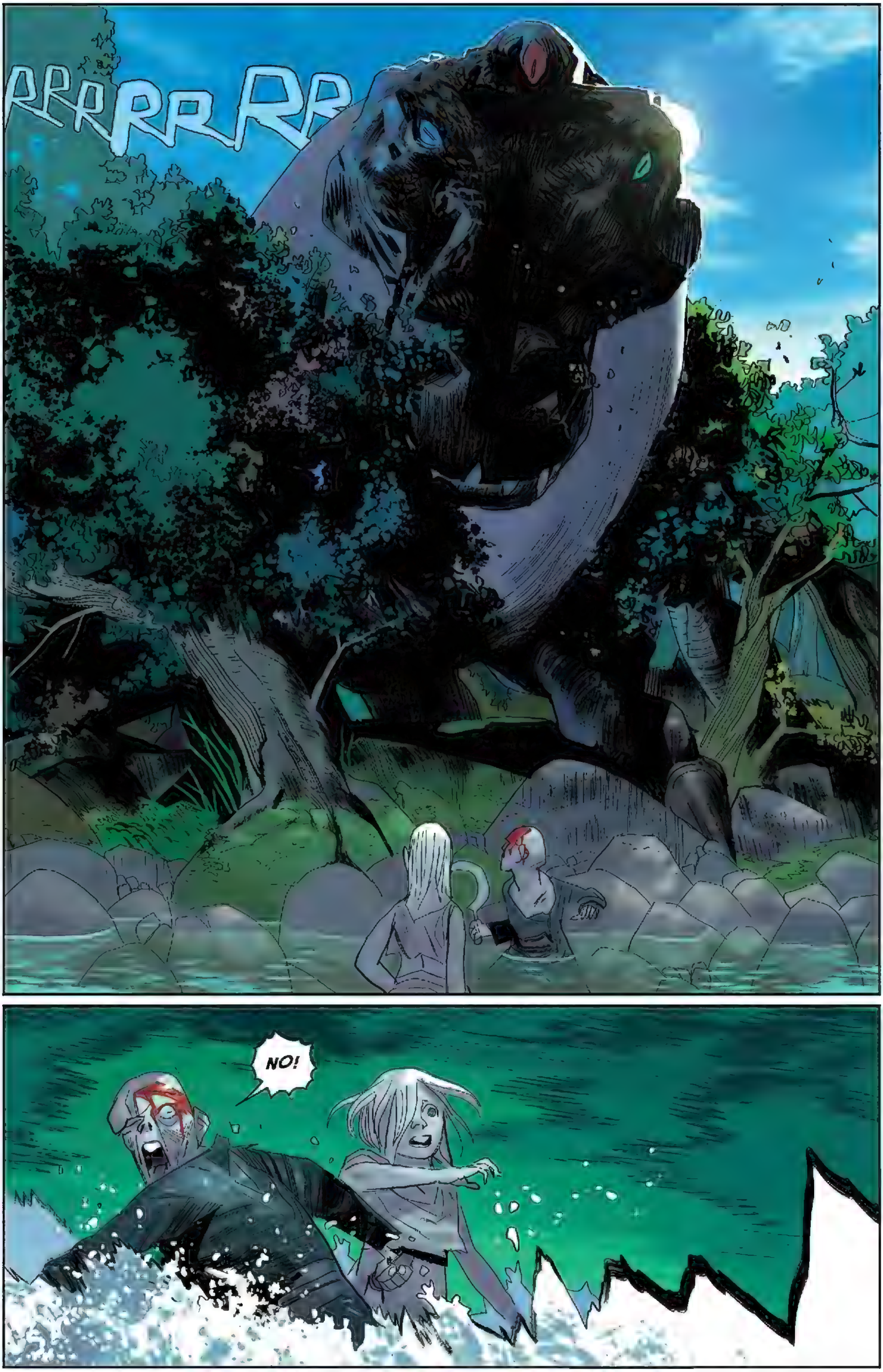

WHAT DO I DO NOW?
WHAT WAS I THINKING? WHY DID I RUN? THEY WERE RIGHT, THEY WERE *ALWAYS RIGHT.*
WHY DID YOU CONVINCE ME THAT THEY WEREN'T?
MAYBE I SHOULD GO BACK. MAYBE THEY'LL ALLOW ME BACK IN THE TOWER. AND... AND THEY'LL GIVE ME FOOD, AND THEY'LL LEAVE ME ALONE FOREVER.

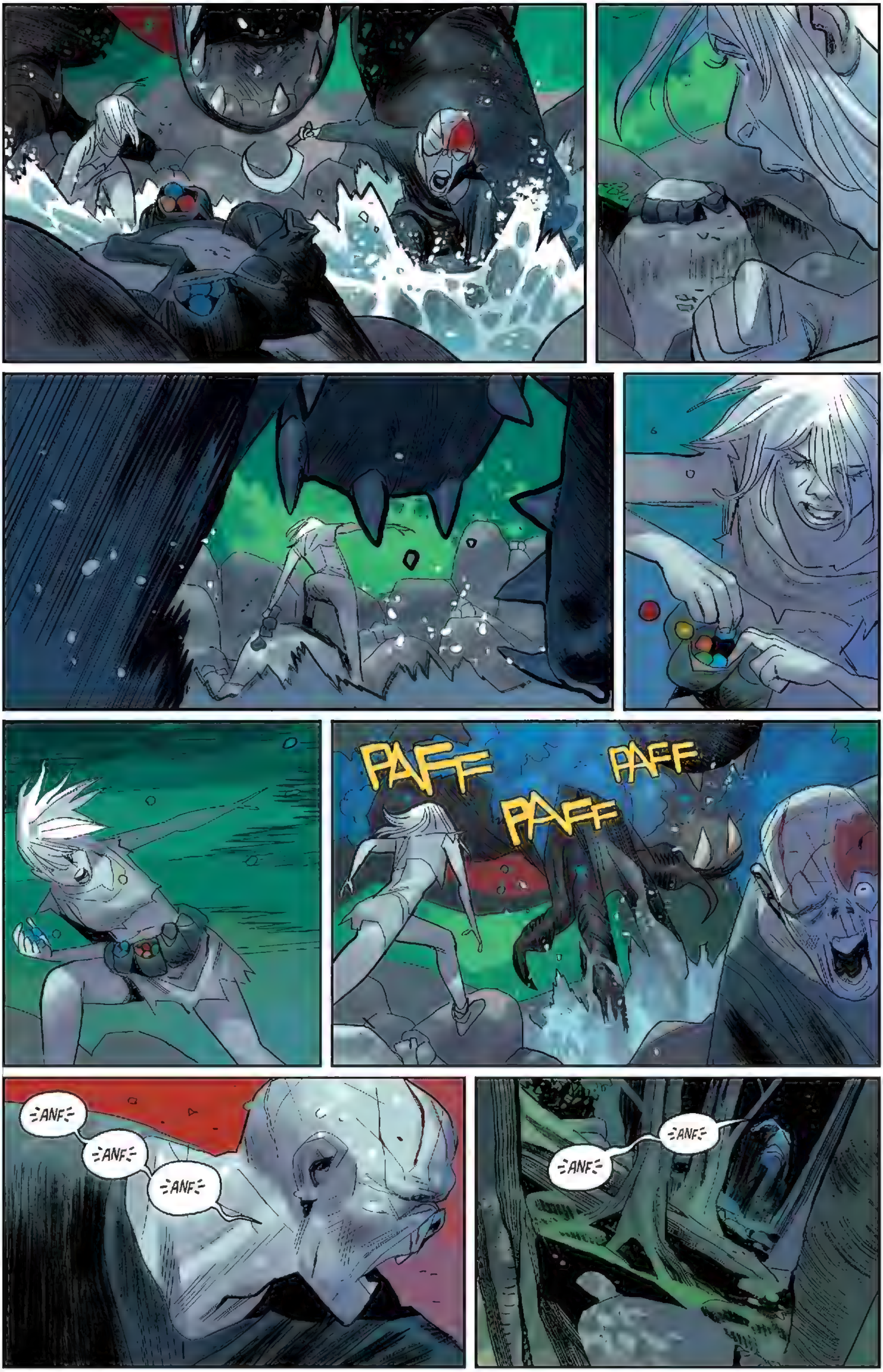

MAYBE...
RRAAAGHH!
KTUMF!

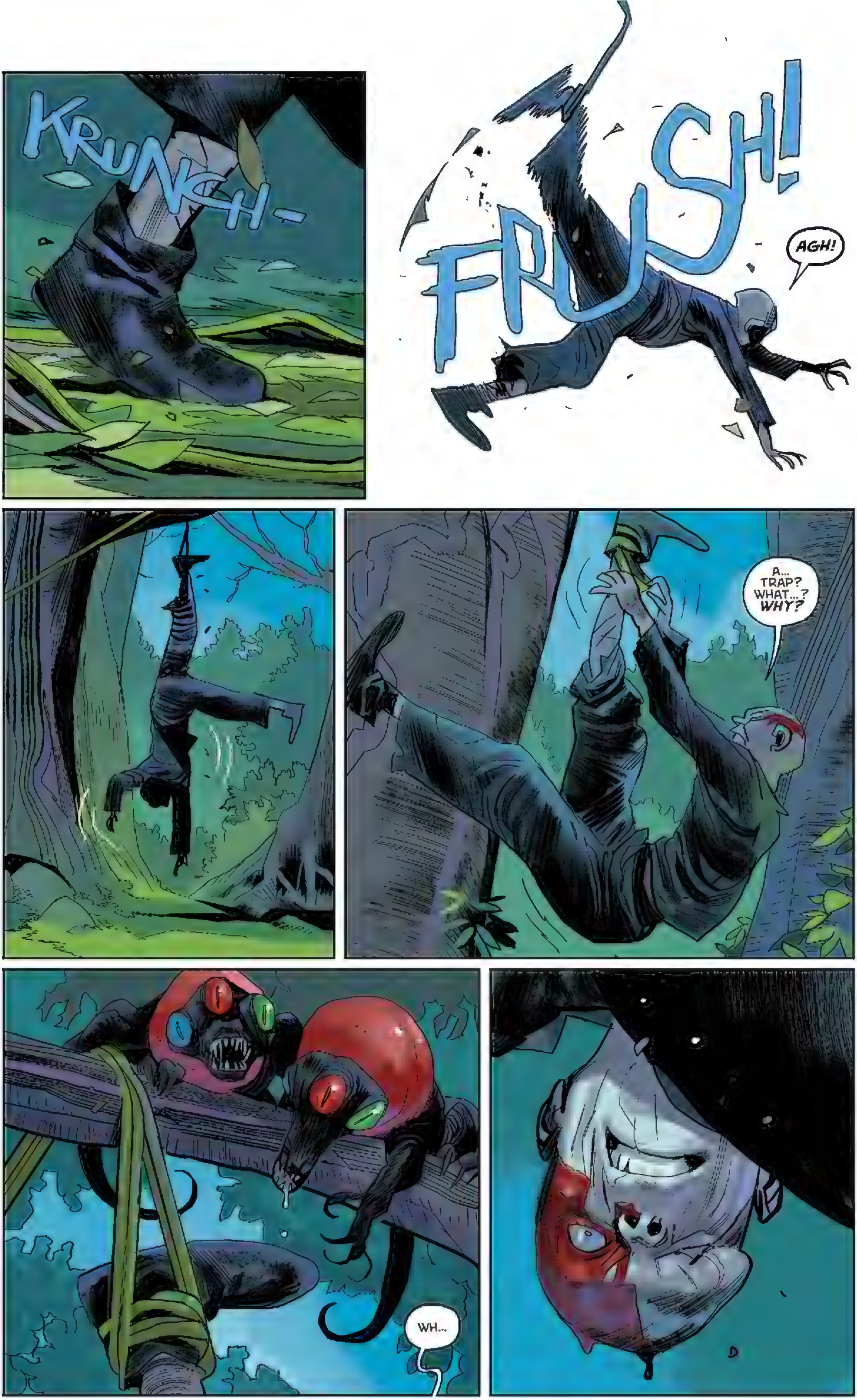

I GOT YOU NOW!
DIE!
DIE!
THROKK

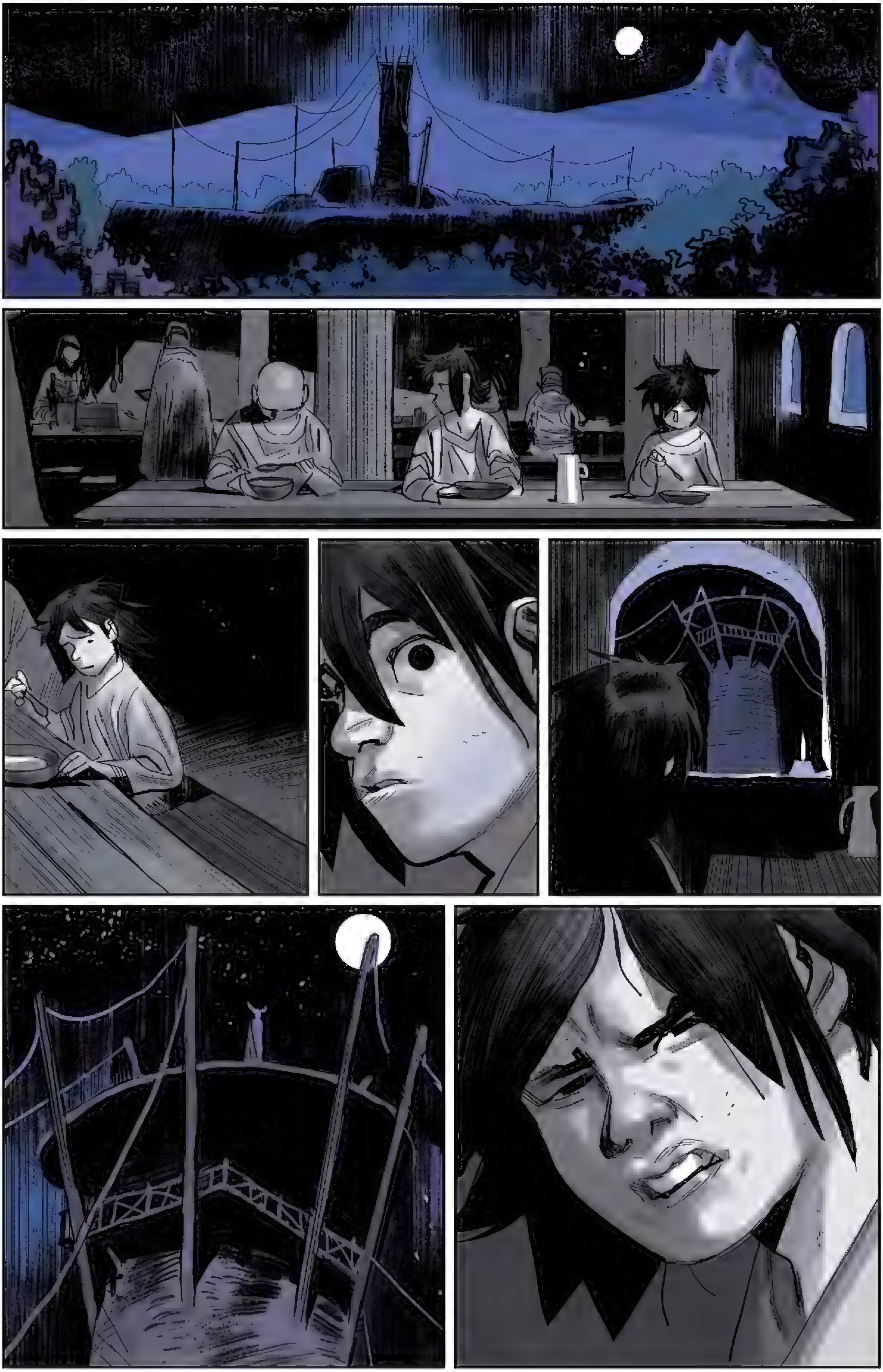

RRAAAAAHGH!
STOP!
I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU, TOO!
HURT *ME?* ARE YOU INSANE?
I HEARD YOU JUST NOW, TALKING TO YOURSELF... EXCEPT... YOU WERE TALKING TO HIM, RIGHT? *YOUR FATHER?*
YOU WANT TO REJOIN HIM AT THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN AND WHISPER INTO HIS EAR ALL OUR WEAKNESSES!
YOU WANT TO FINISH YOUR MISSION, DON'T YOU? YOU WANT US *DEAD! ALL OF US!*

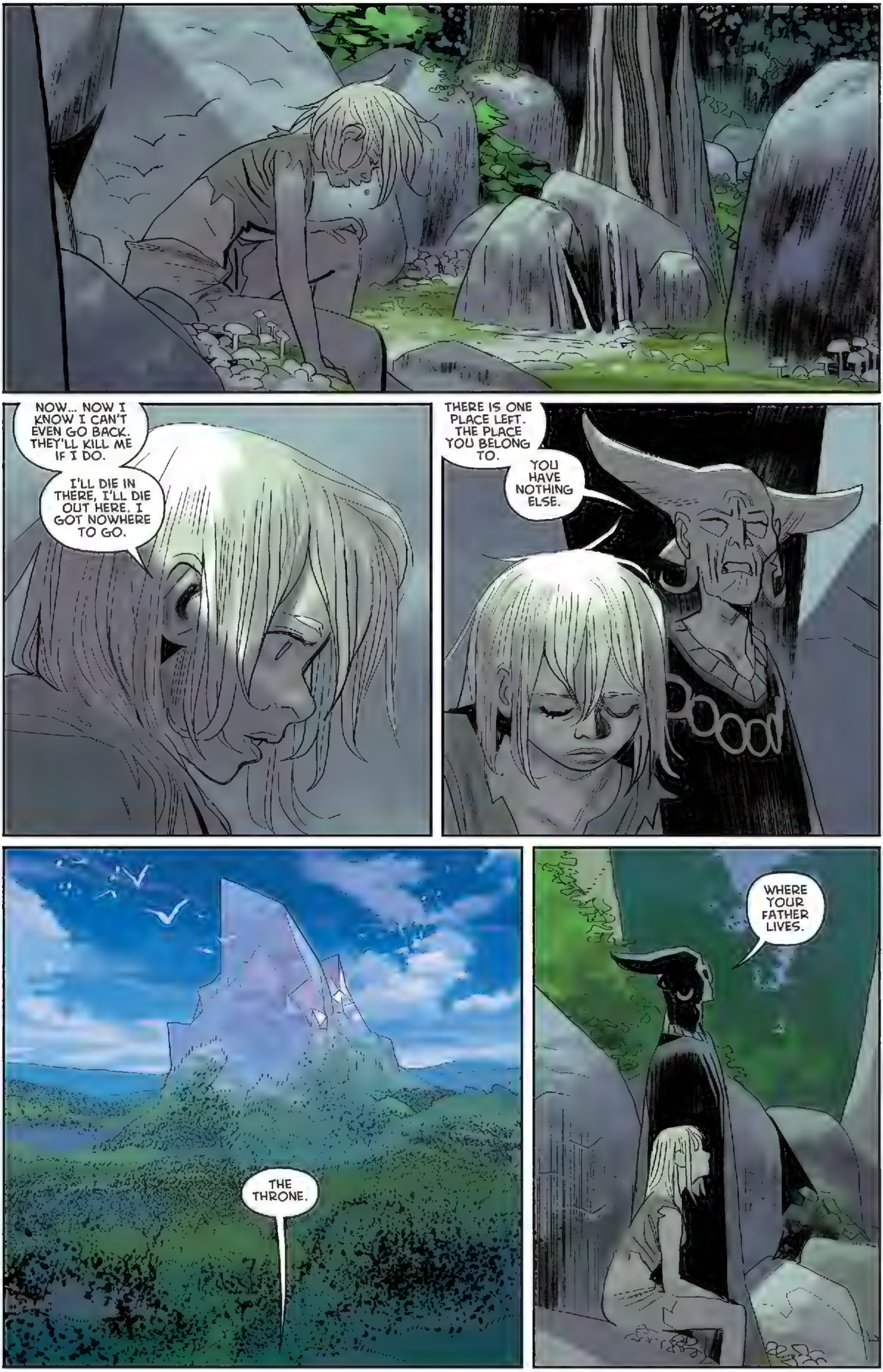

I WANT TO GO BACK!
WHAT?
I DIDN'T MEAN TO HURT YOU... I DIDN'T WANT TO HURT *THE BIRD!* BUT YOU AND ALL YOUR LIES, AND THEN ZET... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GO, JUST...
...TAKE ME BACK.
YOU THINK THIS HURTS? THIS IS NOTHING! NOTHING COMPARED TO WHAT WE HAVE *LOST* BECAUSE OF YOU AND YOUR FATHER!
THESE WOUNDS WILL HEAL!
THERE'S NO WAY I'M GOING TO BRING YOU BACK! I WILL *KILL* YOU HERE AND NOW, AND I'LL PUT AN END TO ALL OF THIS NONSENSE!
YOU HEAR ME? *I WILL KILL YOU!*
...THE SUN WENT OUT.

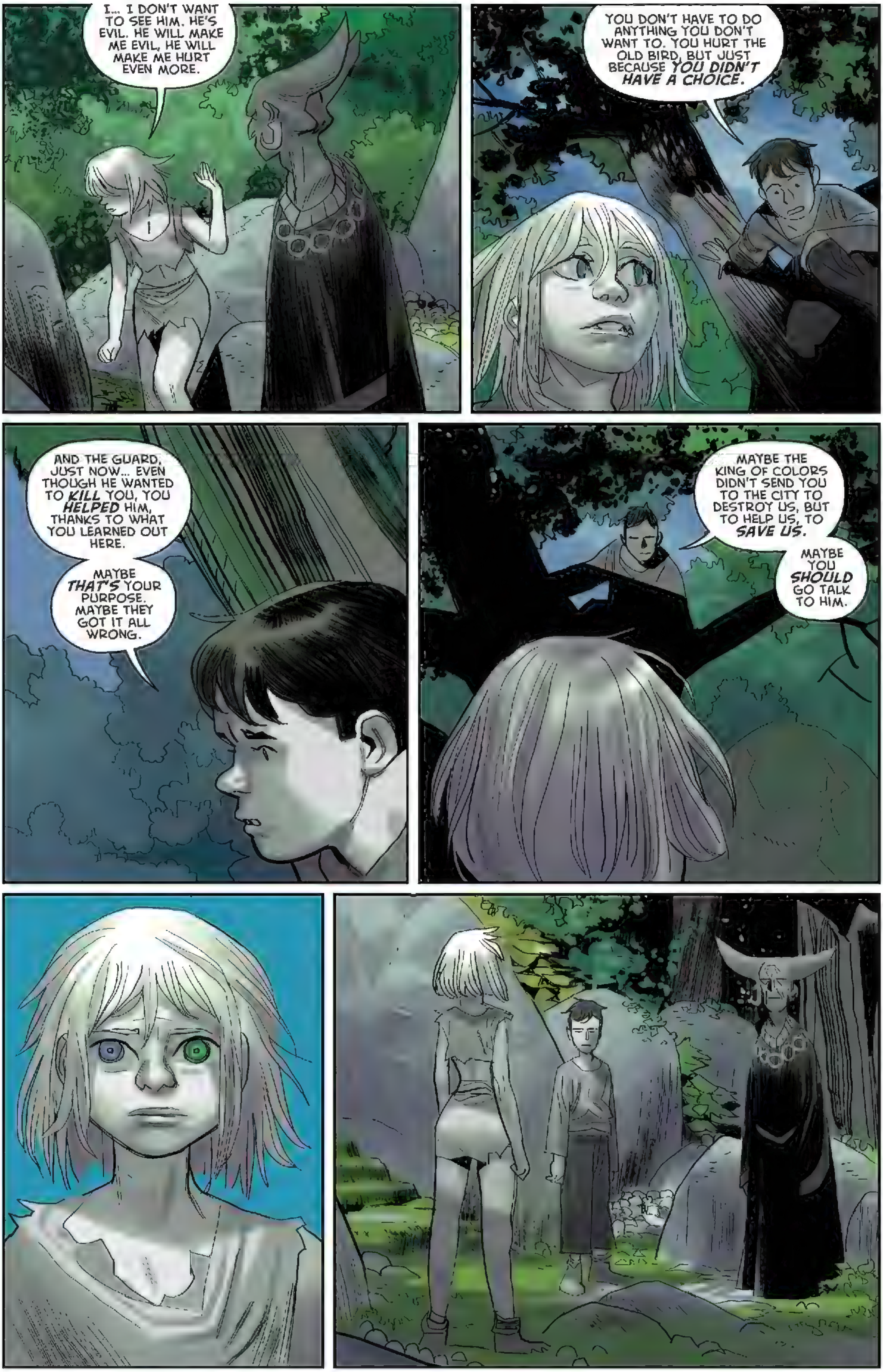

RRRRRRR
NO!

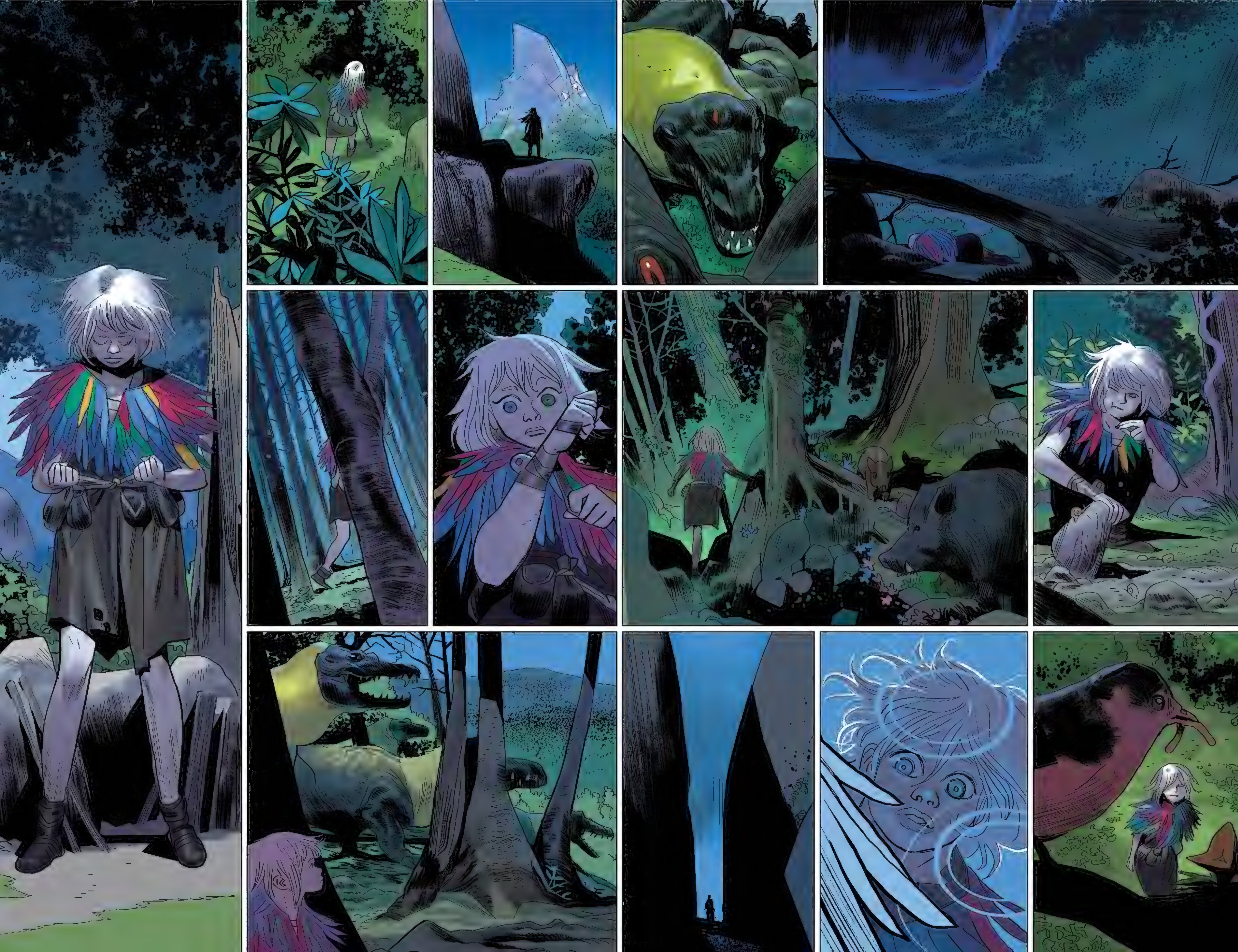

PAFF
PAFF
PAFF
ANF
ANF
ANF
ANF
ANF

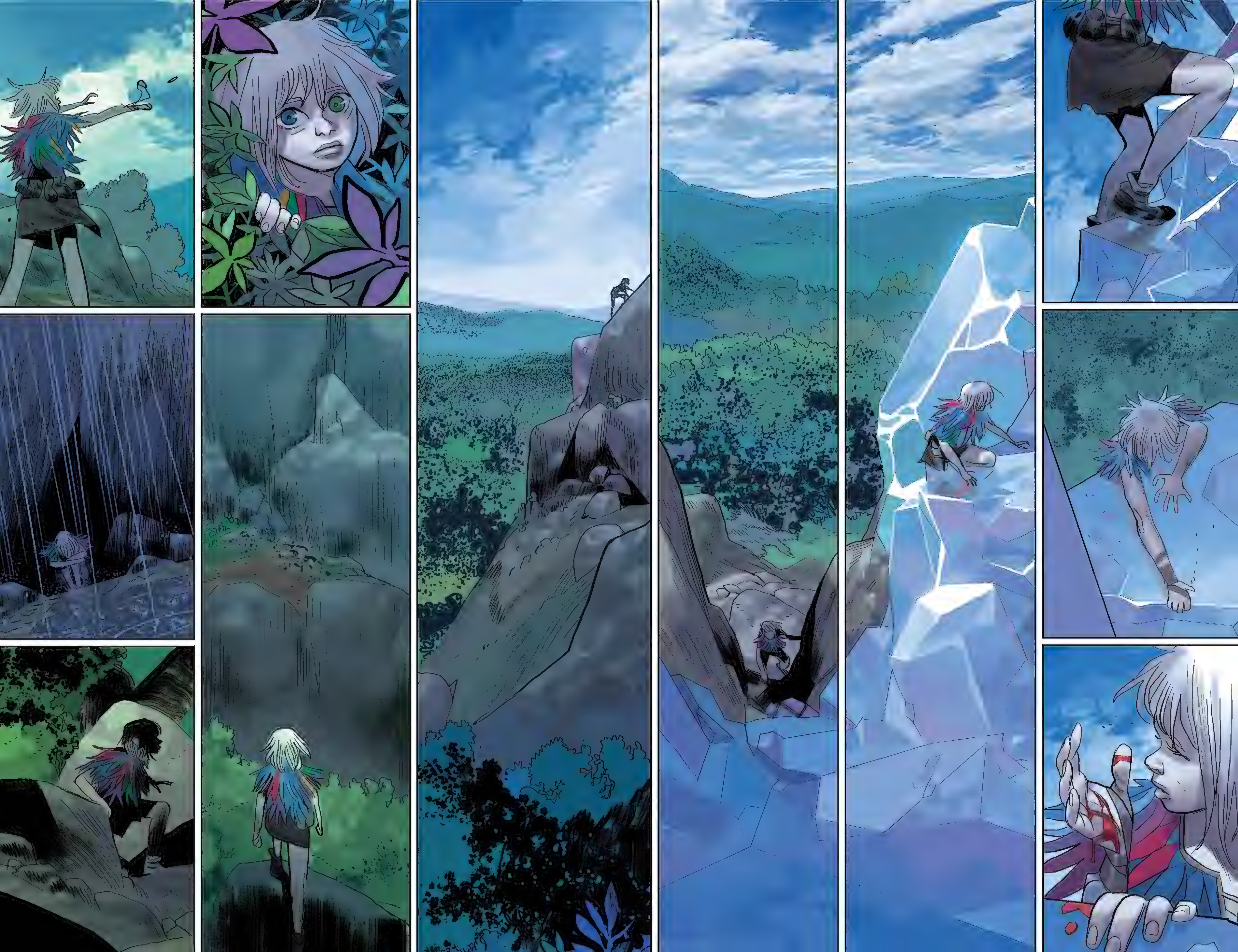

KRUNCH-
FRUSH!
AGH!
A... TRAP? WHAT...? WHY?
WH...

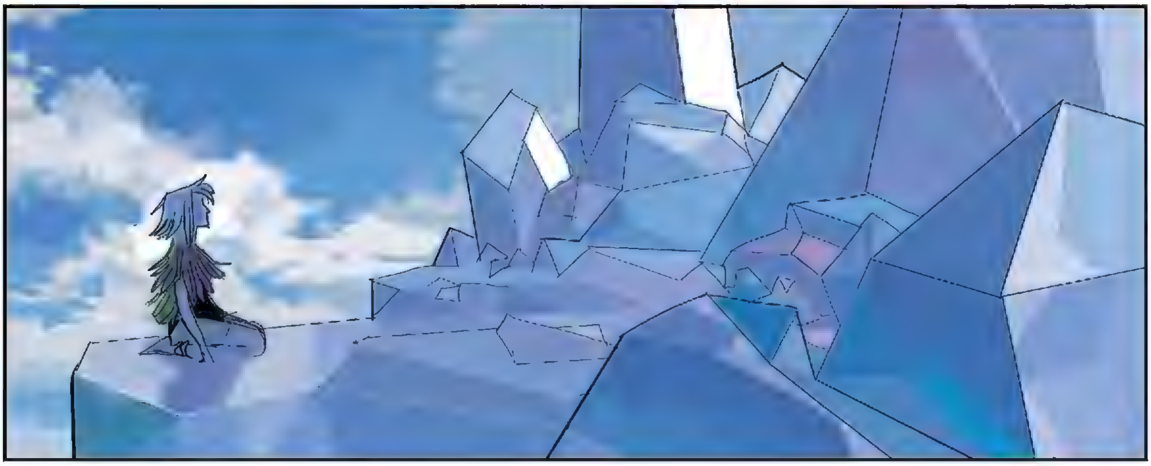


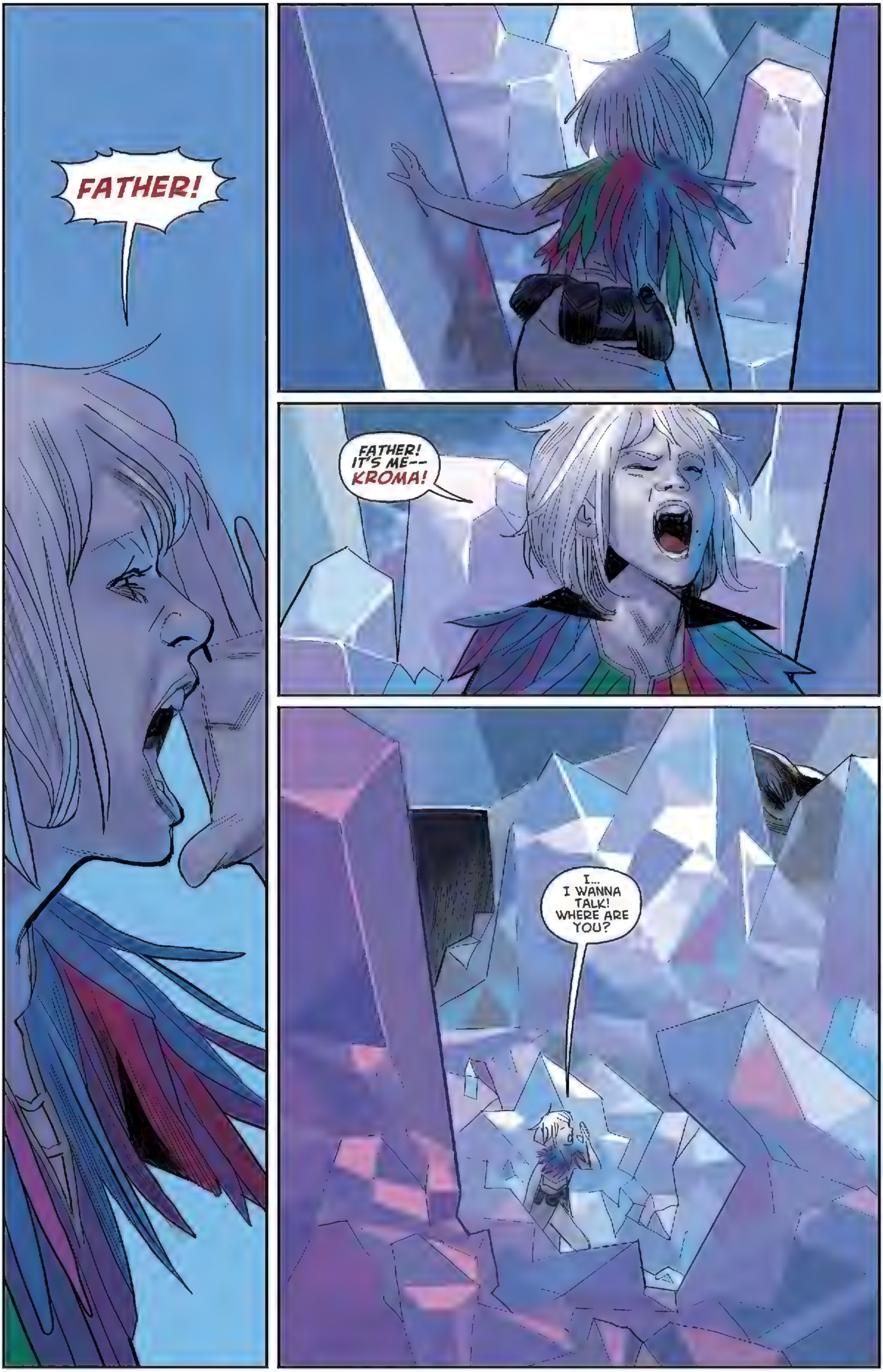

NOW... NOW I KNOW I CAN'T EVEN GO BACK. THEY'LL KILL ME IF I DO.
I'LL DIE IN THERE, I'LL DIE OUT HERE. I GOT NOWHERE TO GO.
THERE IS ONE PLACE LEFT. THE PLACE YOU BELONG TO.
YOU HAVE NOTHING ELSE.
THE THRONE.
WHERE YOUR FATHER LIVES.

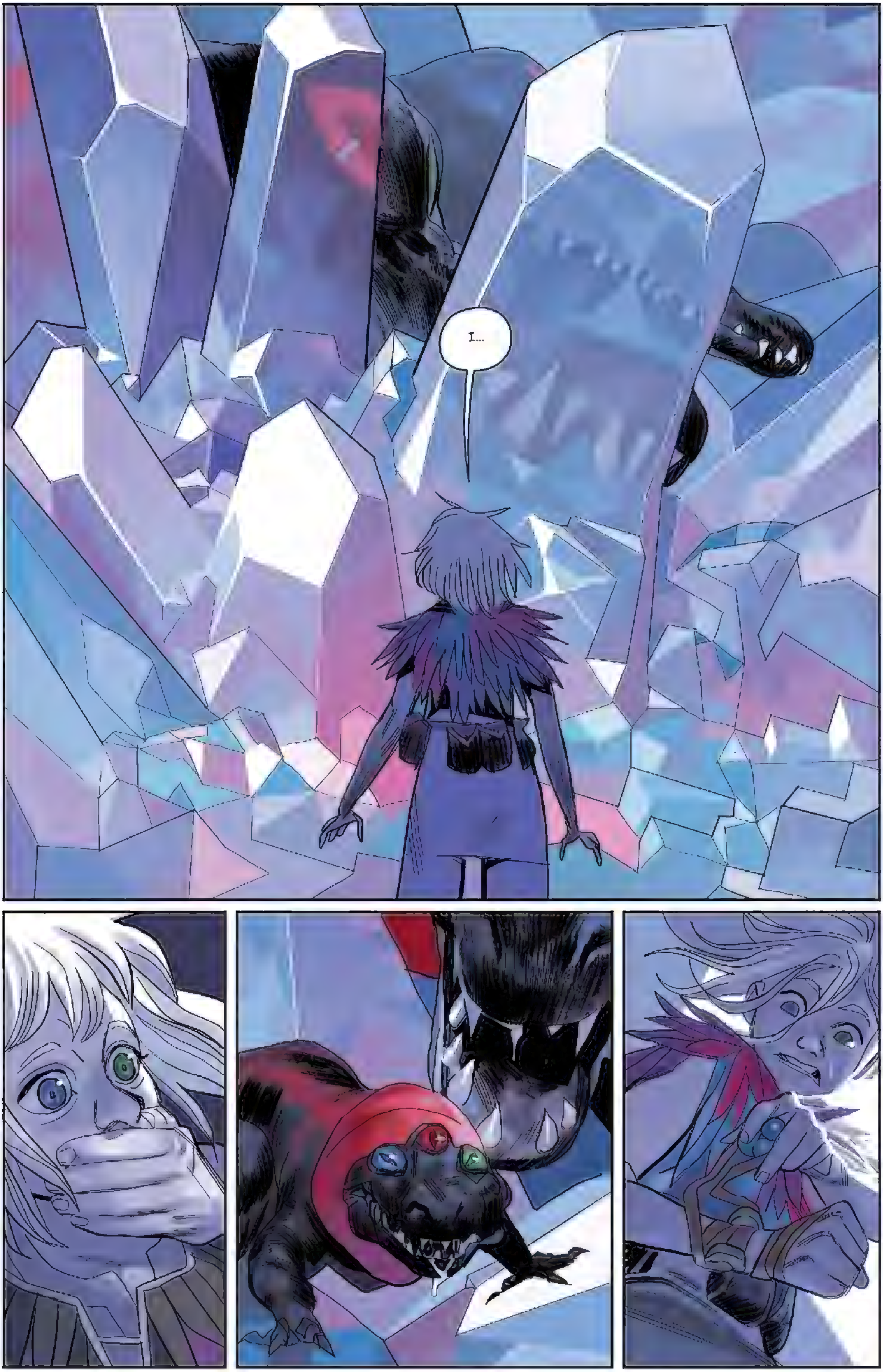

I... I DON'T WANT TO SEE HIM. HE'S EVIL. HE WILL MAKE ME EVIL, HE WILL MAKE ME HURT EVEN MORE.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING YOU DON'T WANT TO. YOU HURT THE OLD BIRD, BUT JUST BECAUSE *YOU DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE.*
AND THE GUARD, JUST NOW... EVEN THOUGH HE WANTED TO *KILL* YOU, YOU *HELPED* HIM, THANKS TO WHAT YOU LEARNED OUT HERE.
MAYBE *THAT'S* YOUR PURPOSE. MAYBE THEY GOT IT ALL WRONG.
MAYBE THE KING OF COLORS DIDN'T SEND YOU TO THE CITY TO DESTROY US, BUT TO HELP US, TO *SAVE US.*
MAYBE YOU *SHOULD* GO TALK TO HIM.

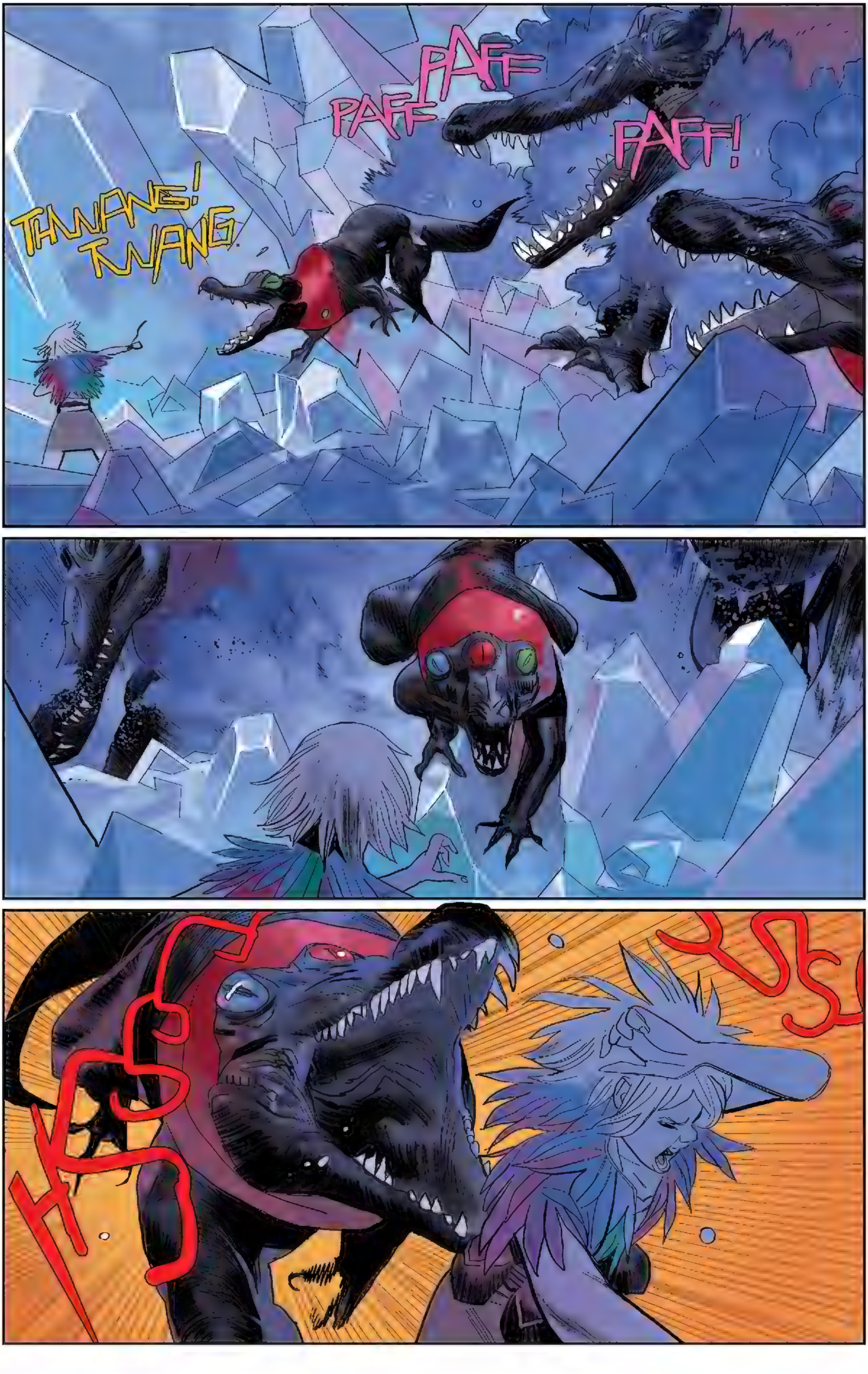


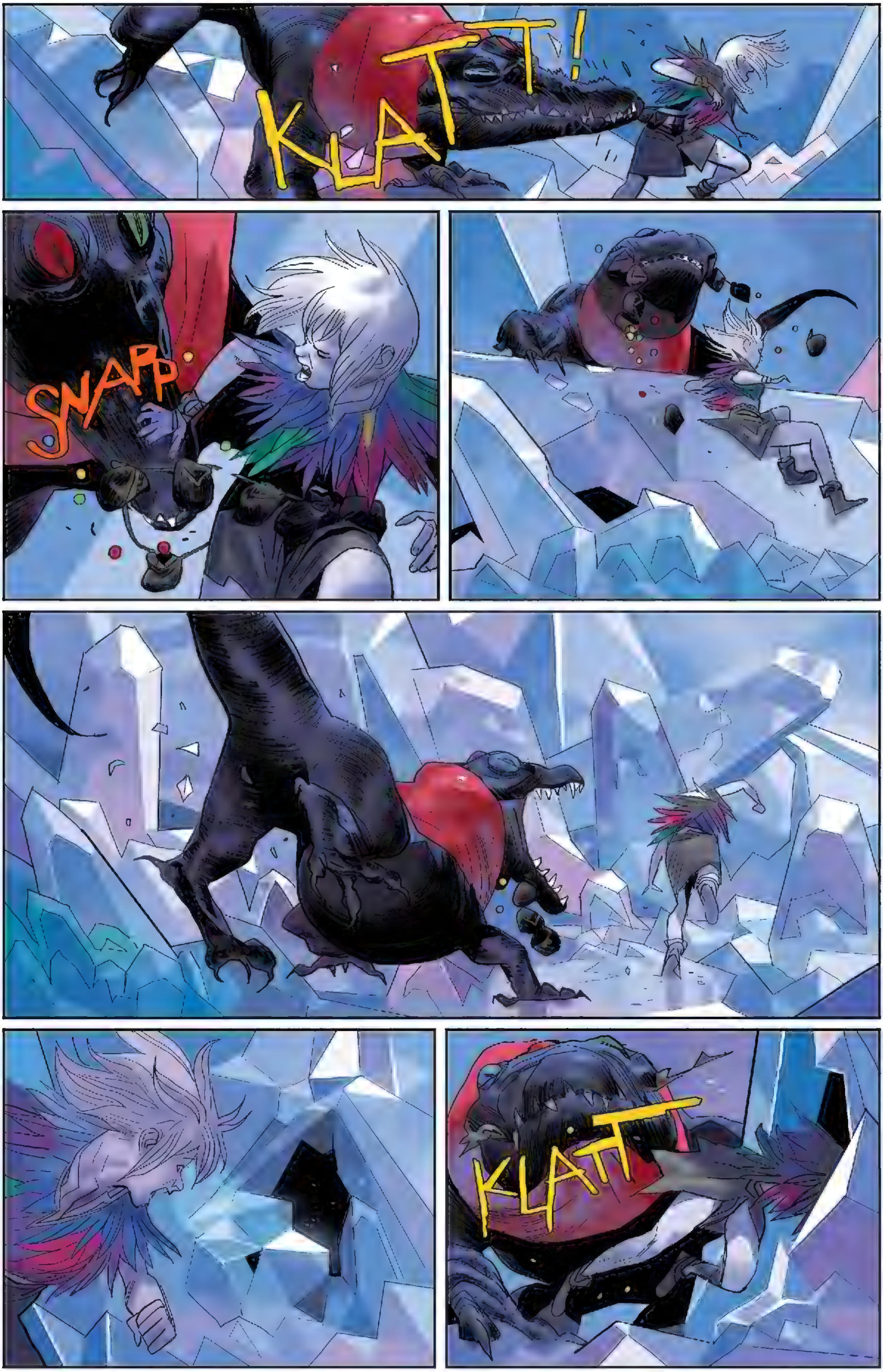


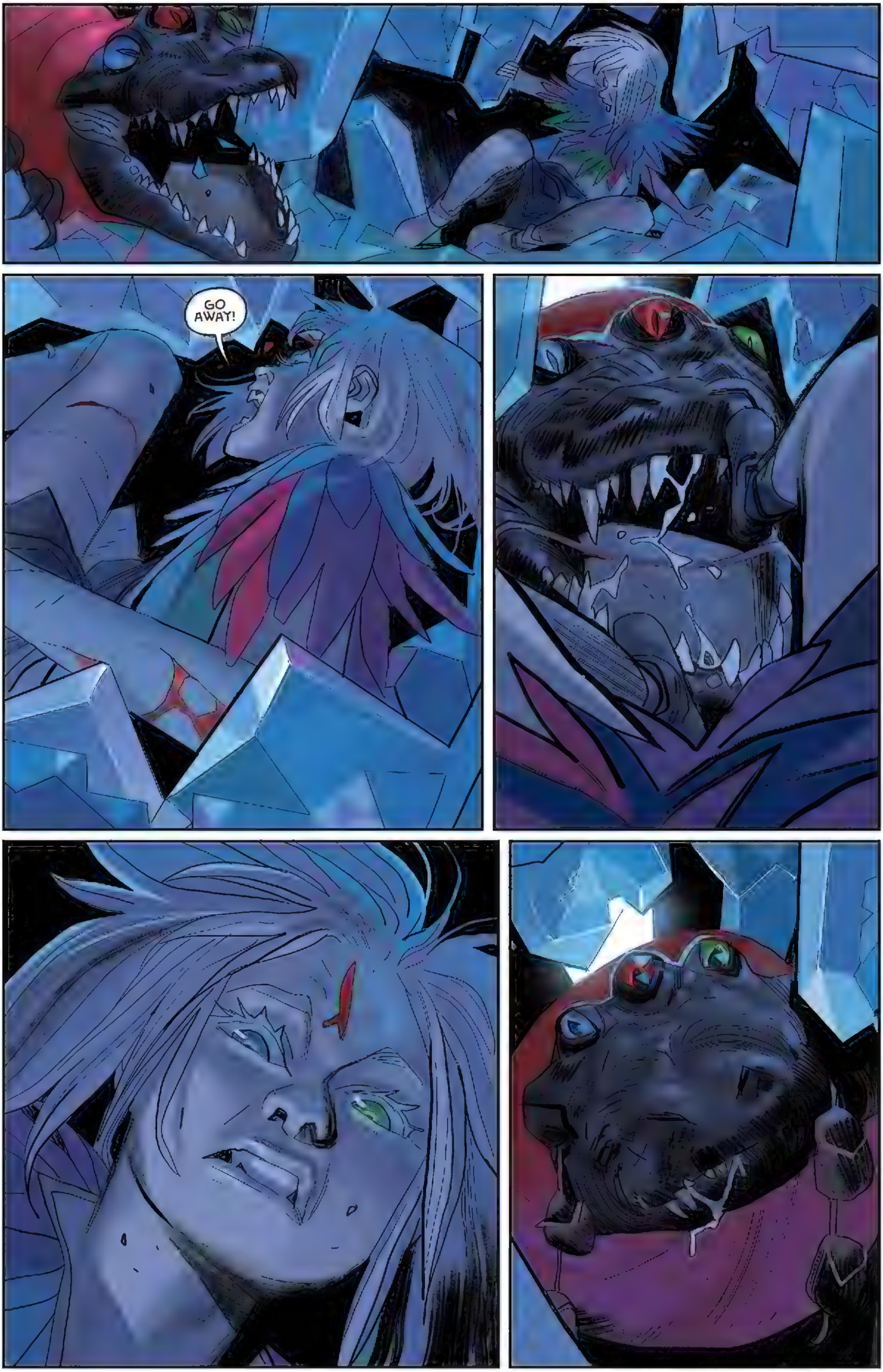


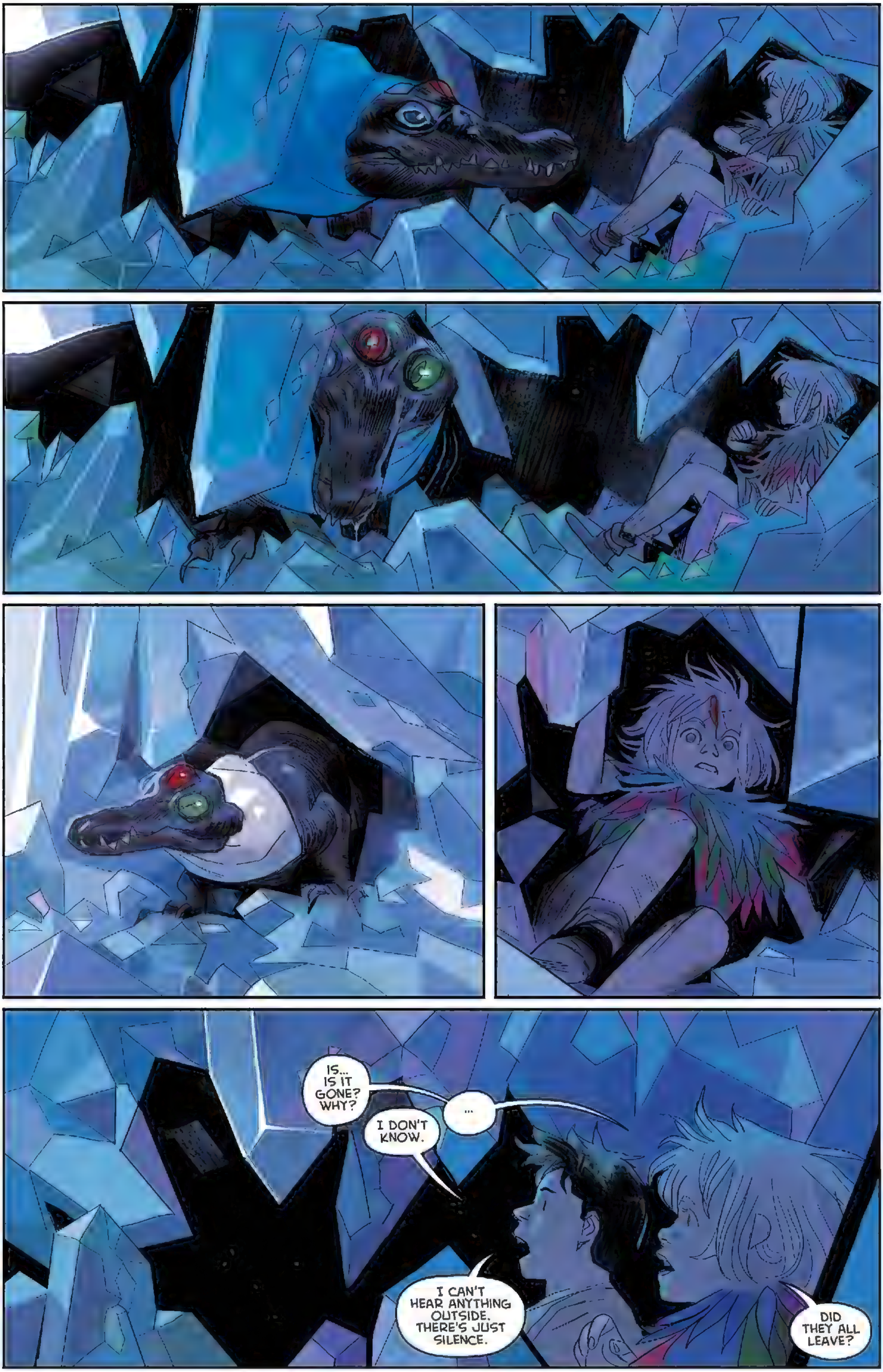

FATHER!
FATHER! IT'S ME-- KROMA!
I... I WANNA TALK! WHERE ARE YOU?

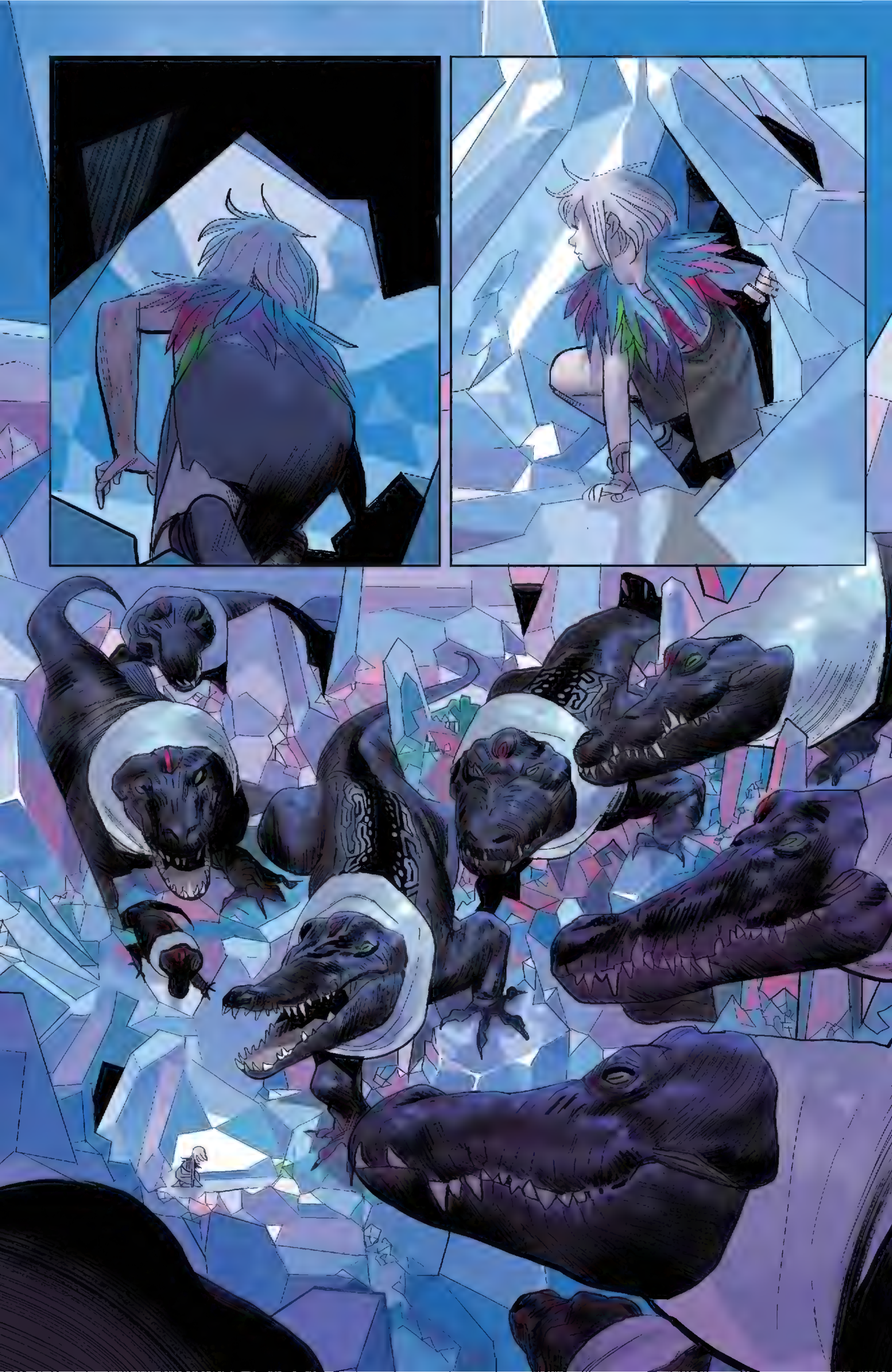

I...

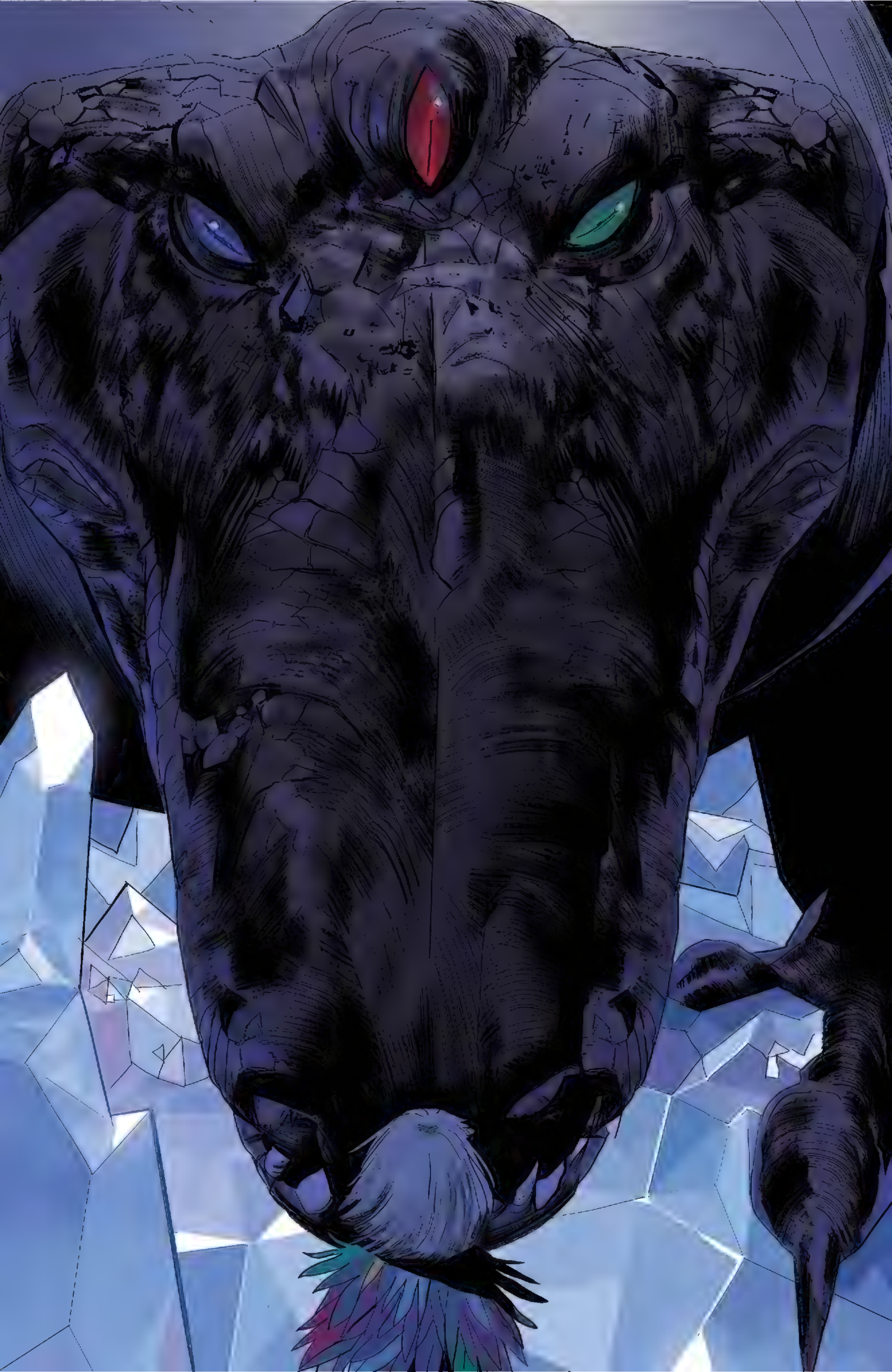

PAFF
PAFF
PAFF!
THWANG!
TWANG.
HSS

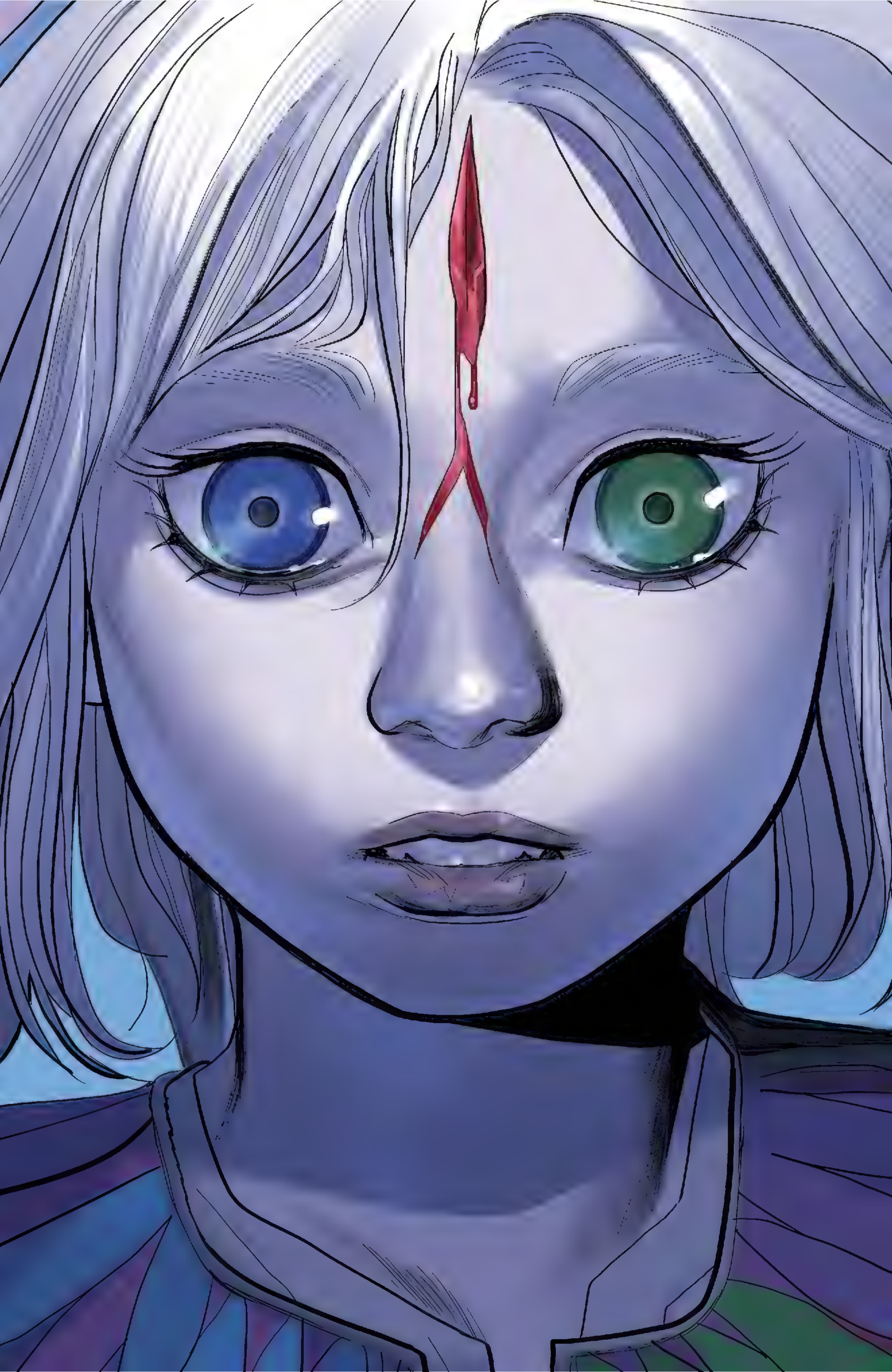

KLATTT!
SNAPP
KLATT

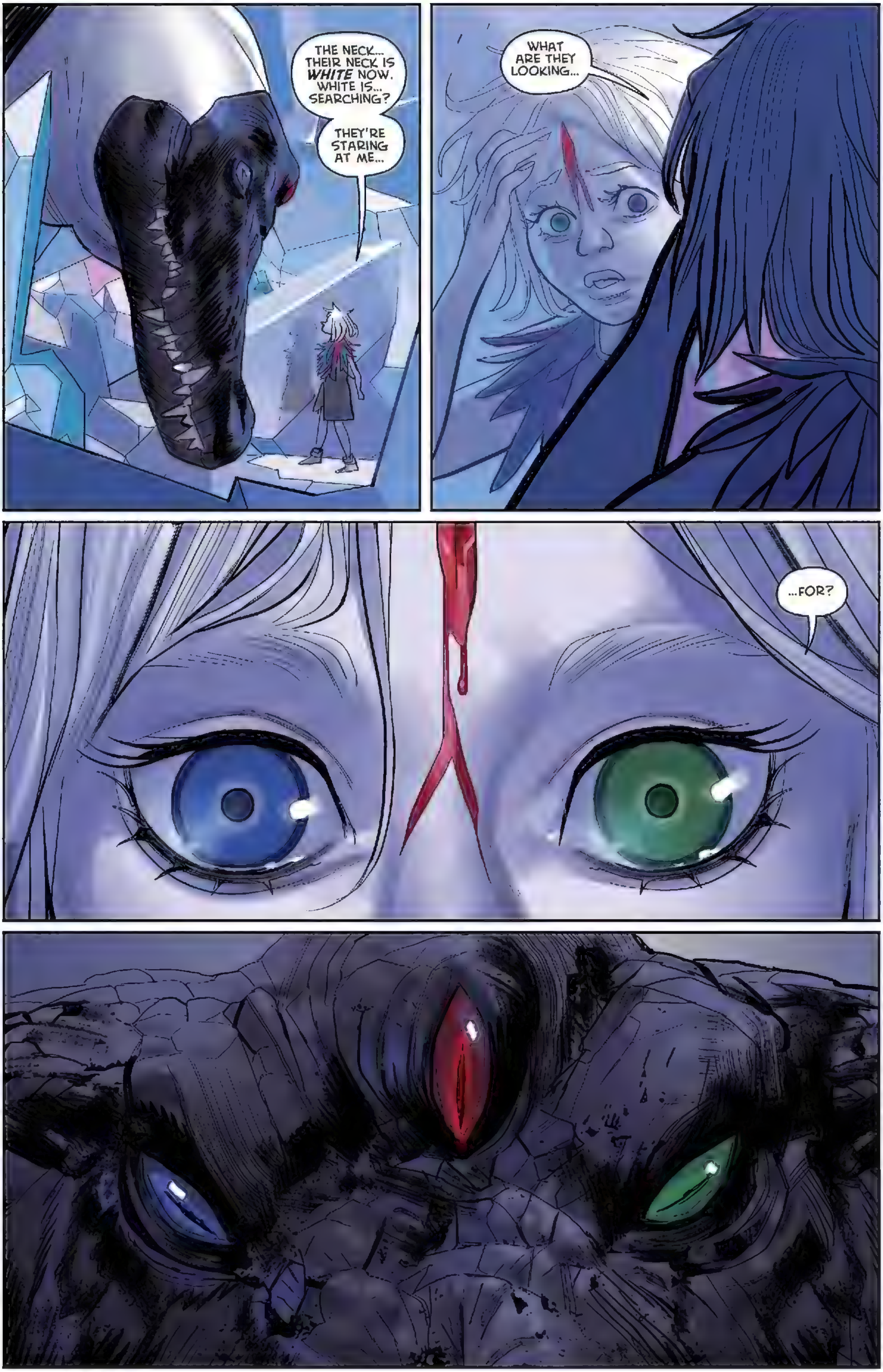

GO AWAY!

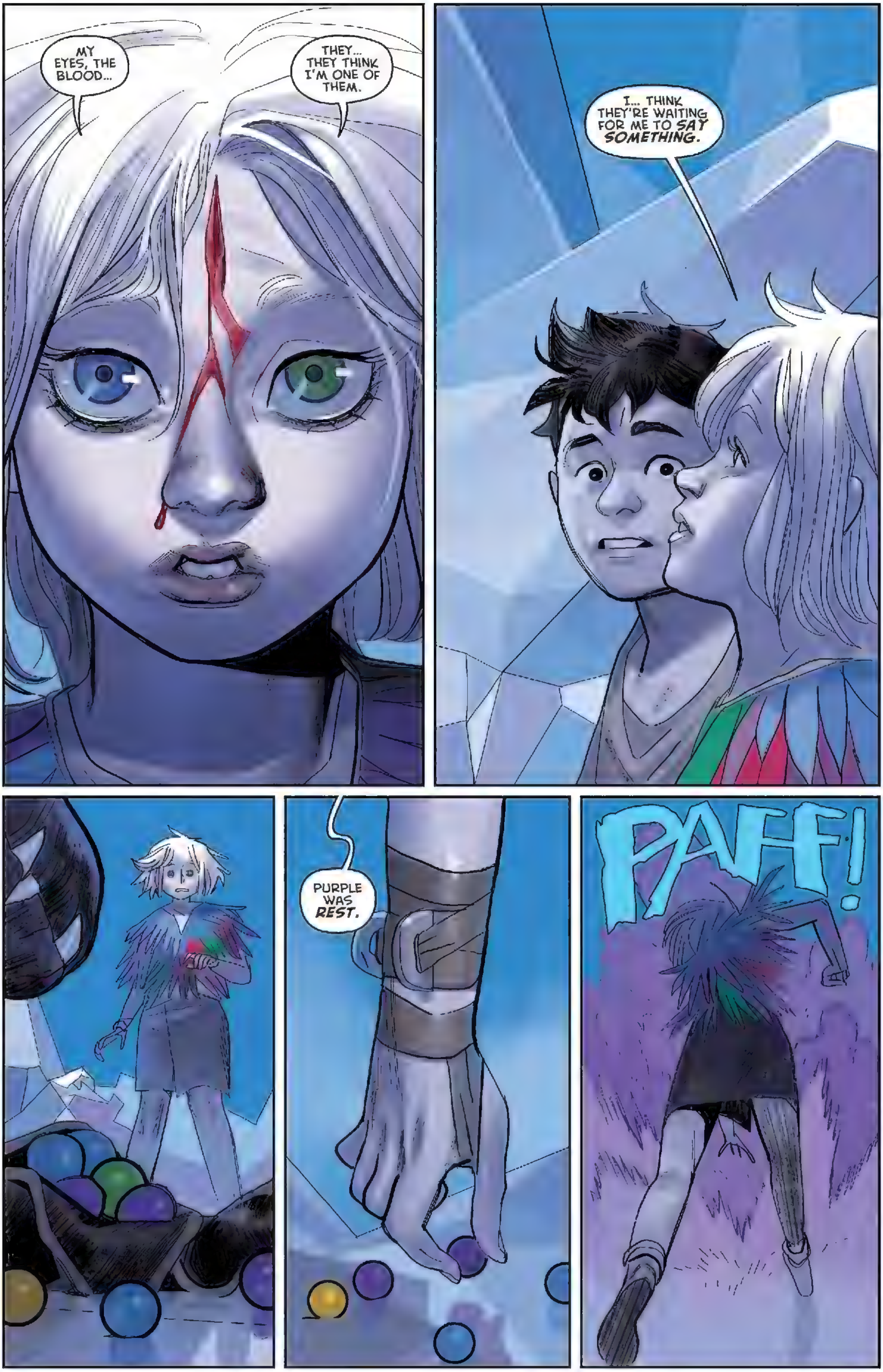

IS... IS IT GONE? WHY?
...
I DON'T KNOW.
I CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING OUTSIDE. THERE'S JUST SILENCE.
DID THEY ALL LEAVE?

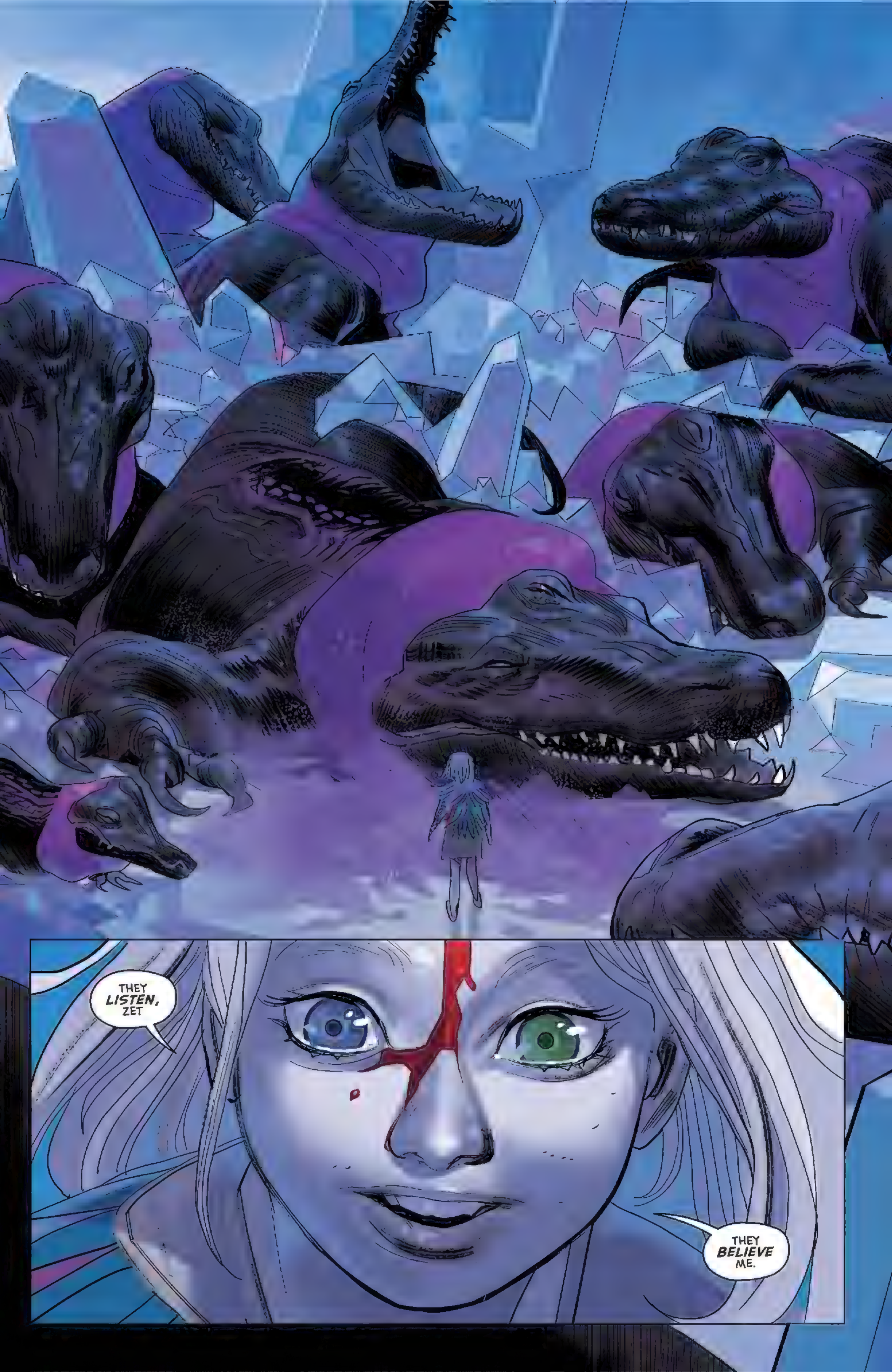




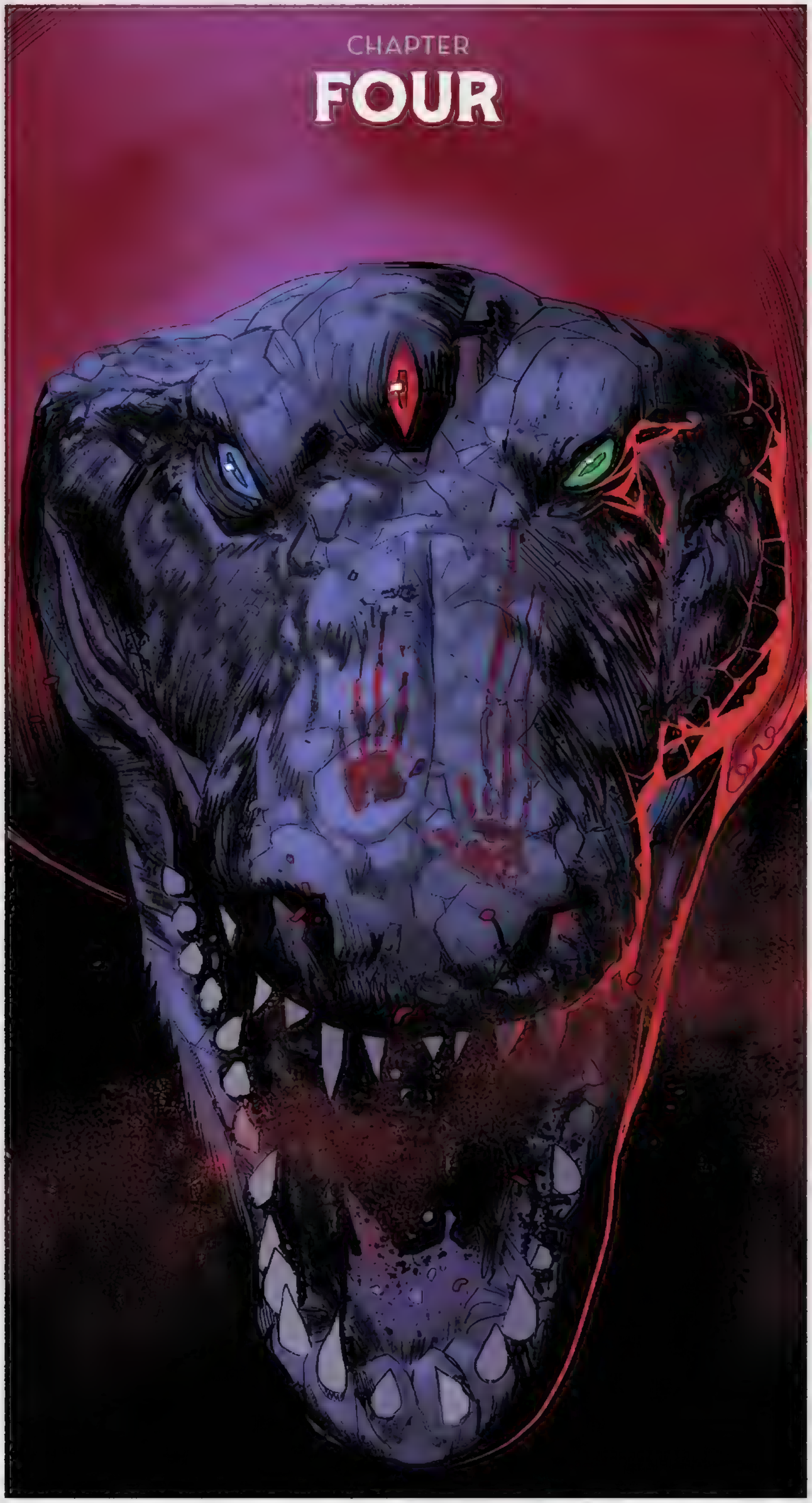


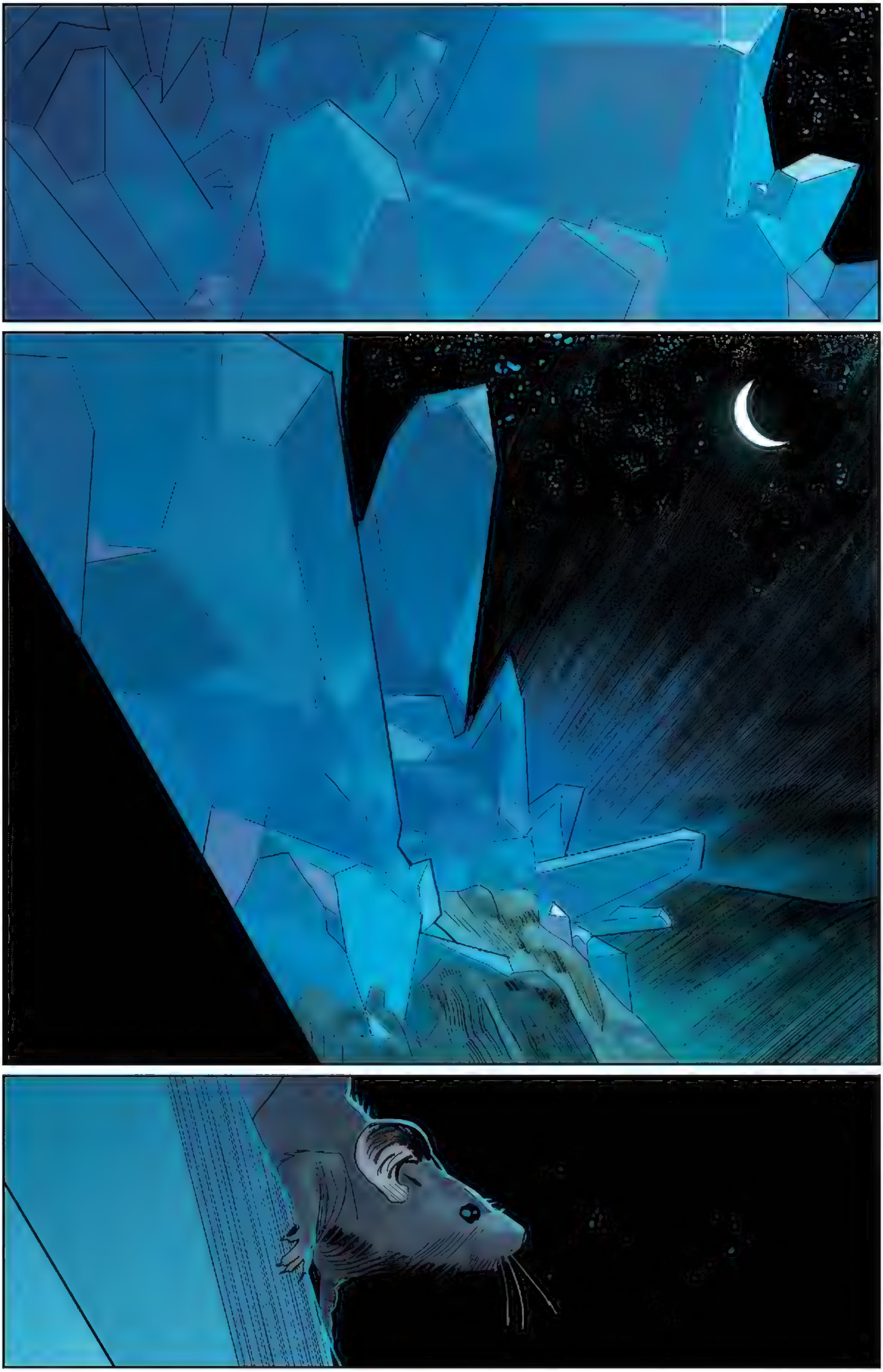

THE NECK... THEIR NECK IS *WHITE* NOW. WHITE IS... SEARCHING?
THEY'RE STARING AT ME...
WHAT ARE THEY LOOKING...
...FOR?

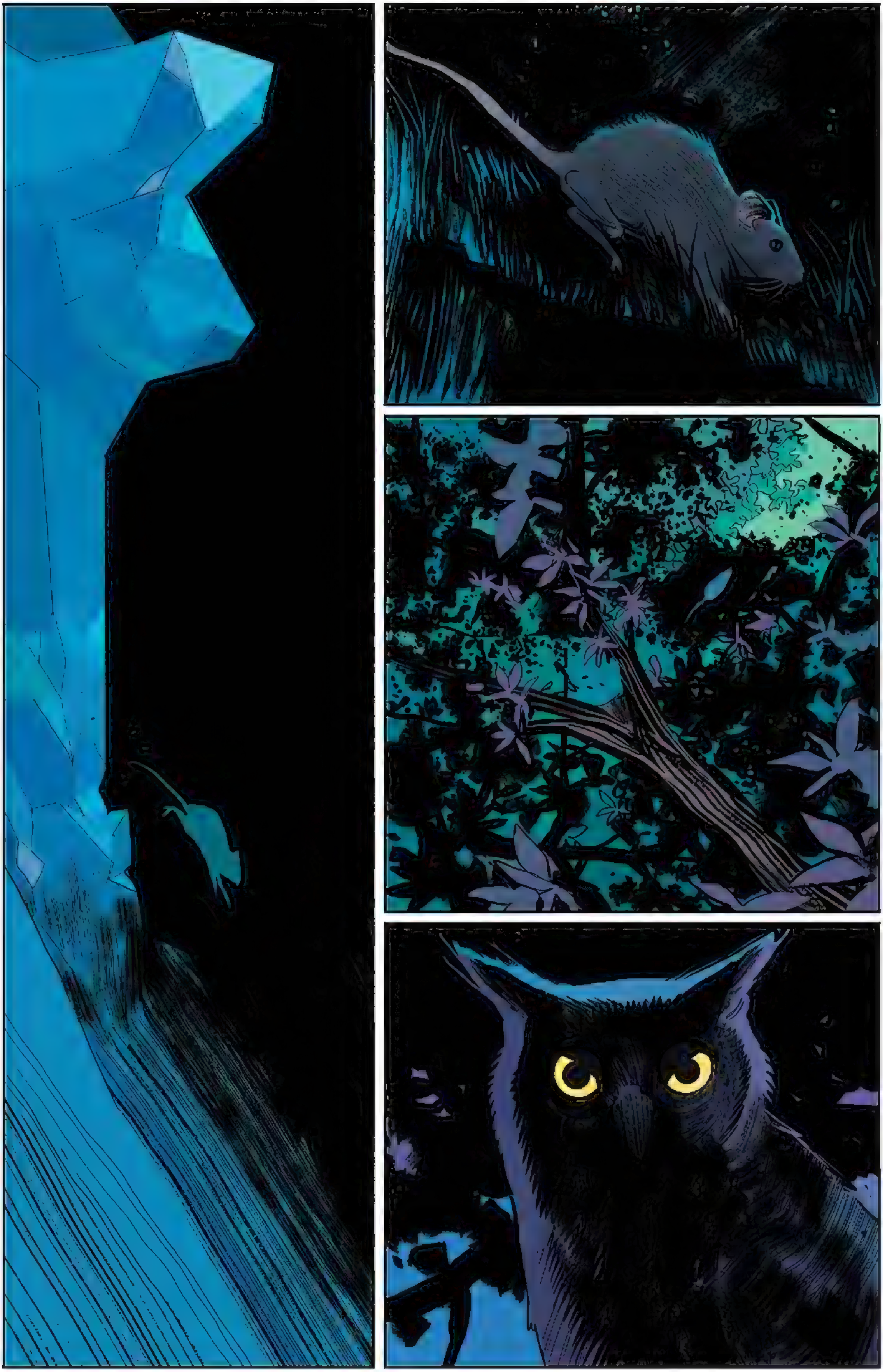

MY EYES, THE BLOOD...
THEY... THEY THINK I'M ONE OF THEM.
I... THINK THEY'RE WAITING FOR ME TO *SAY SOMETHING.*
PURPLE WAS *REST.*
PAFF!

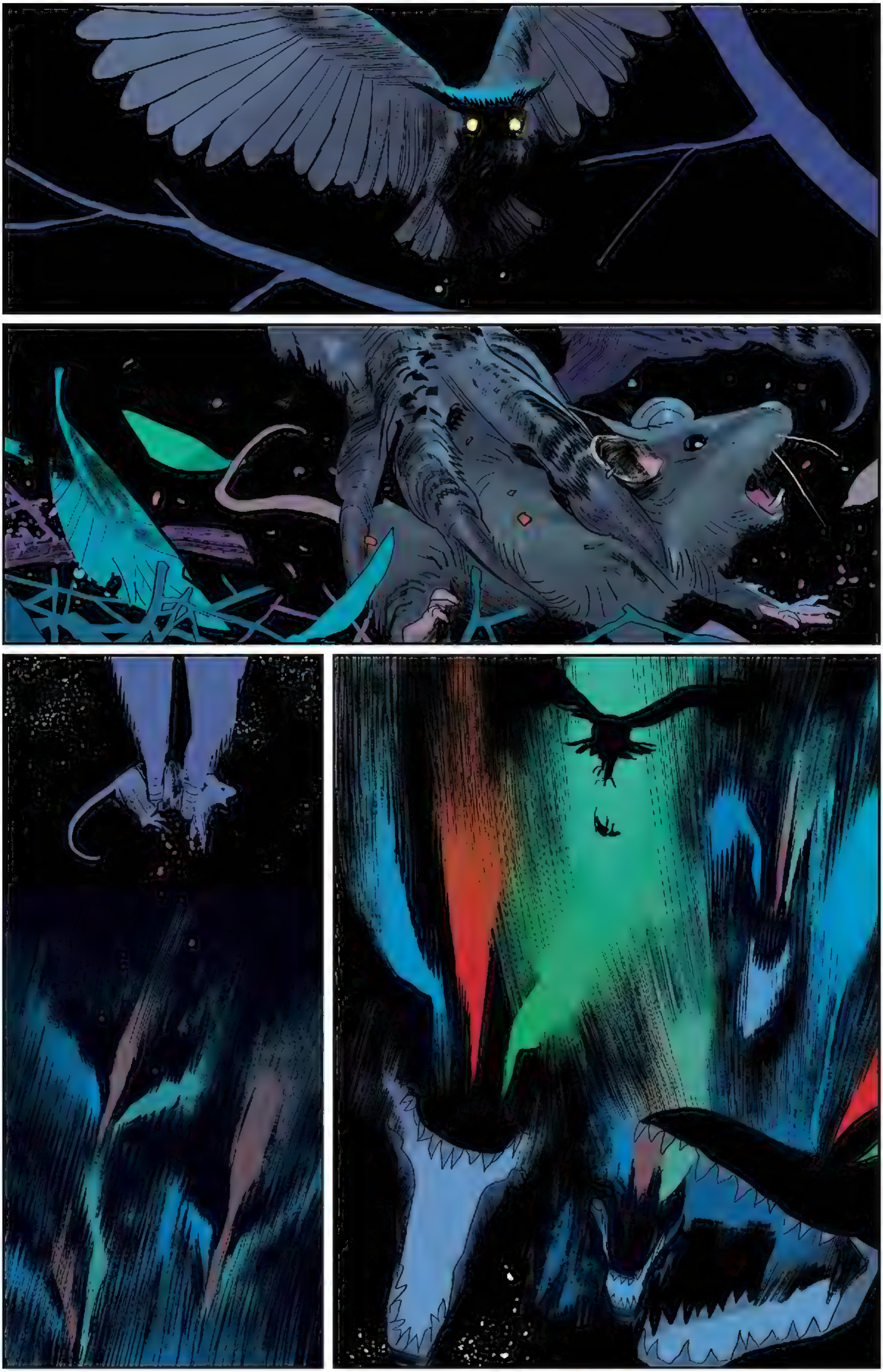

THEY *LISTEN,* ZET
THEY *BELIEVE* ME.

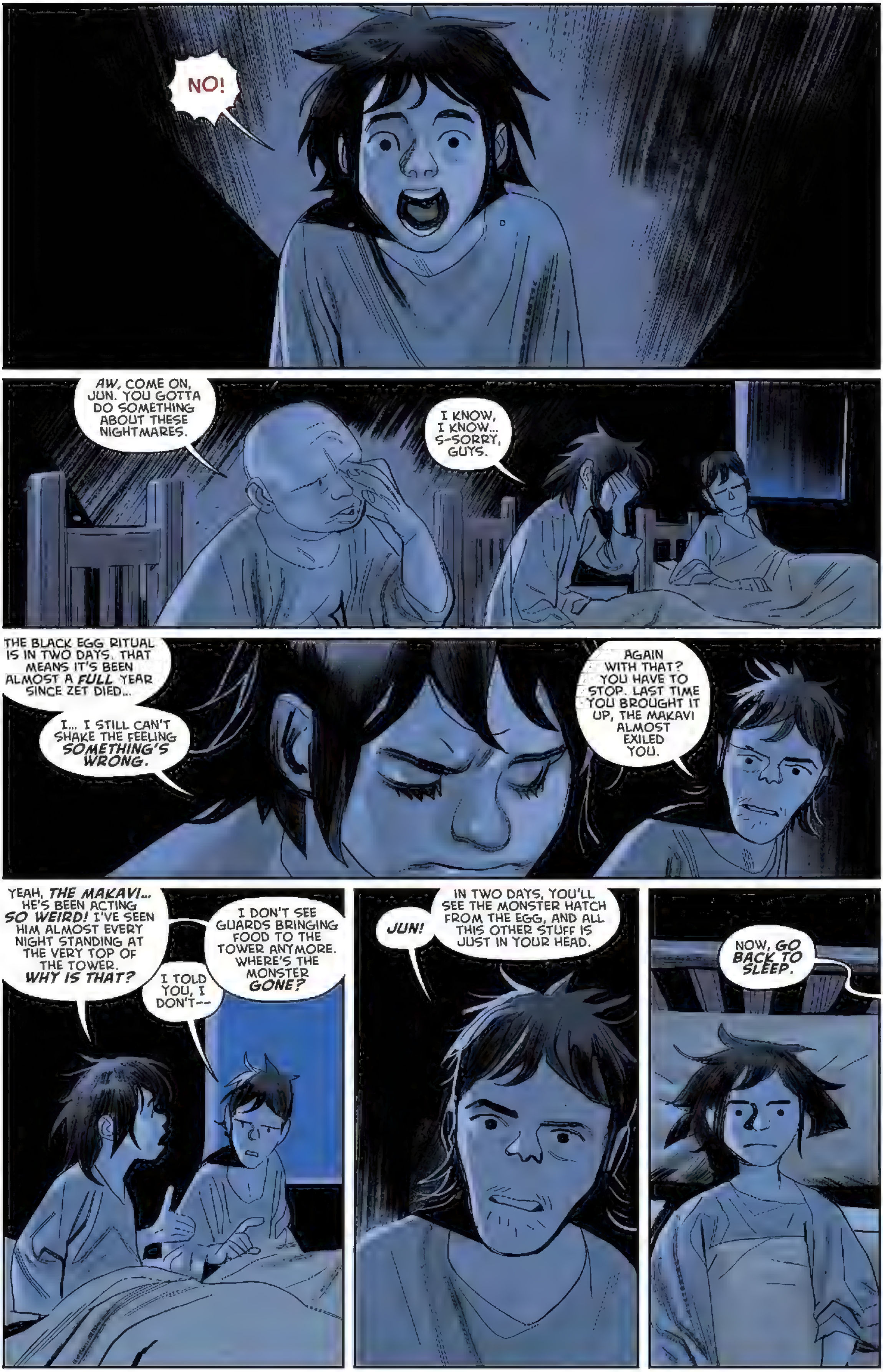
CHAPTER
FOUR

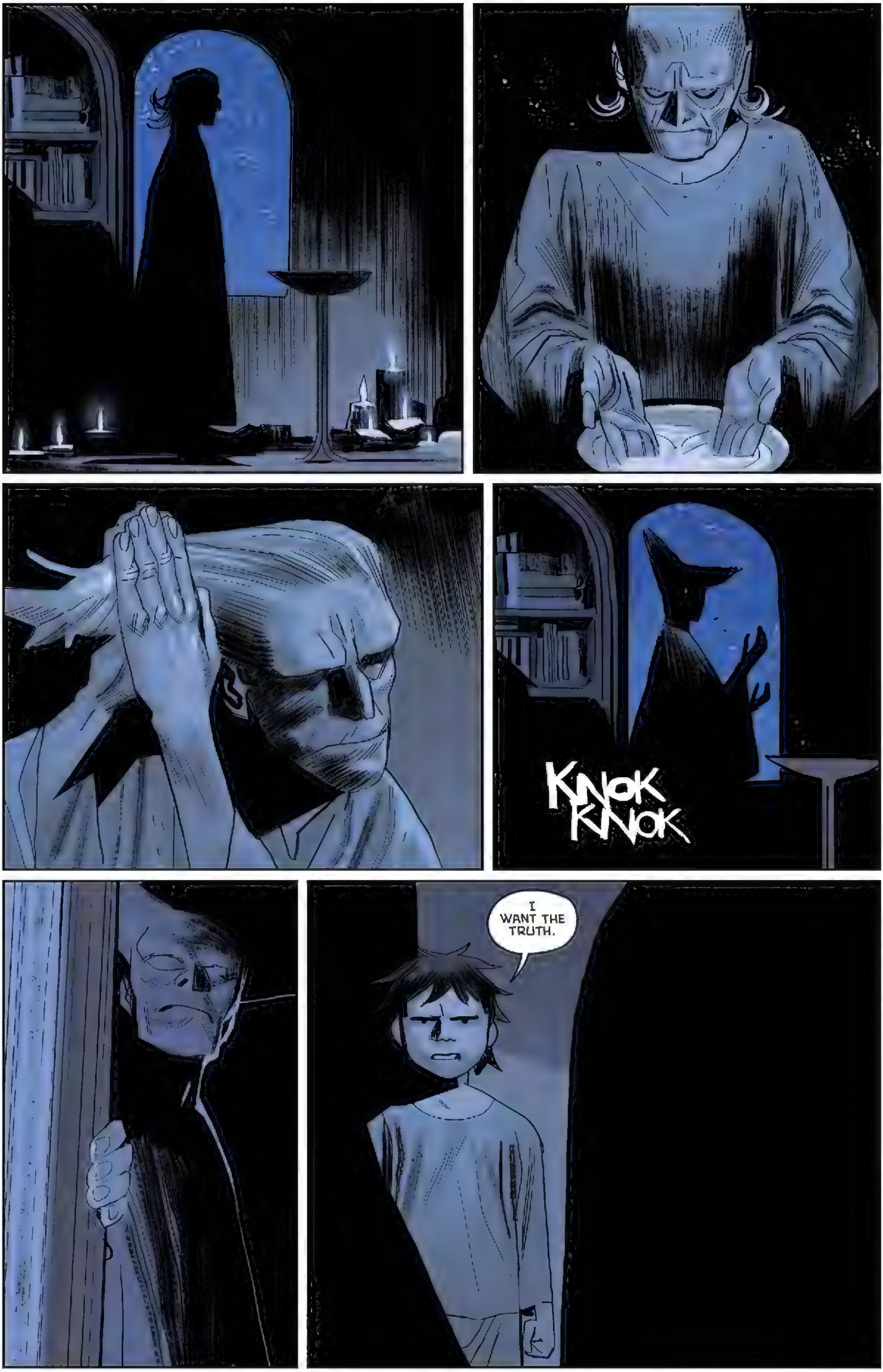


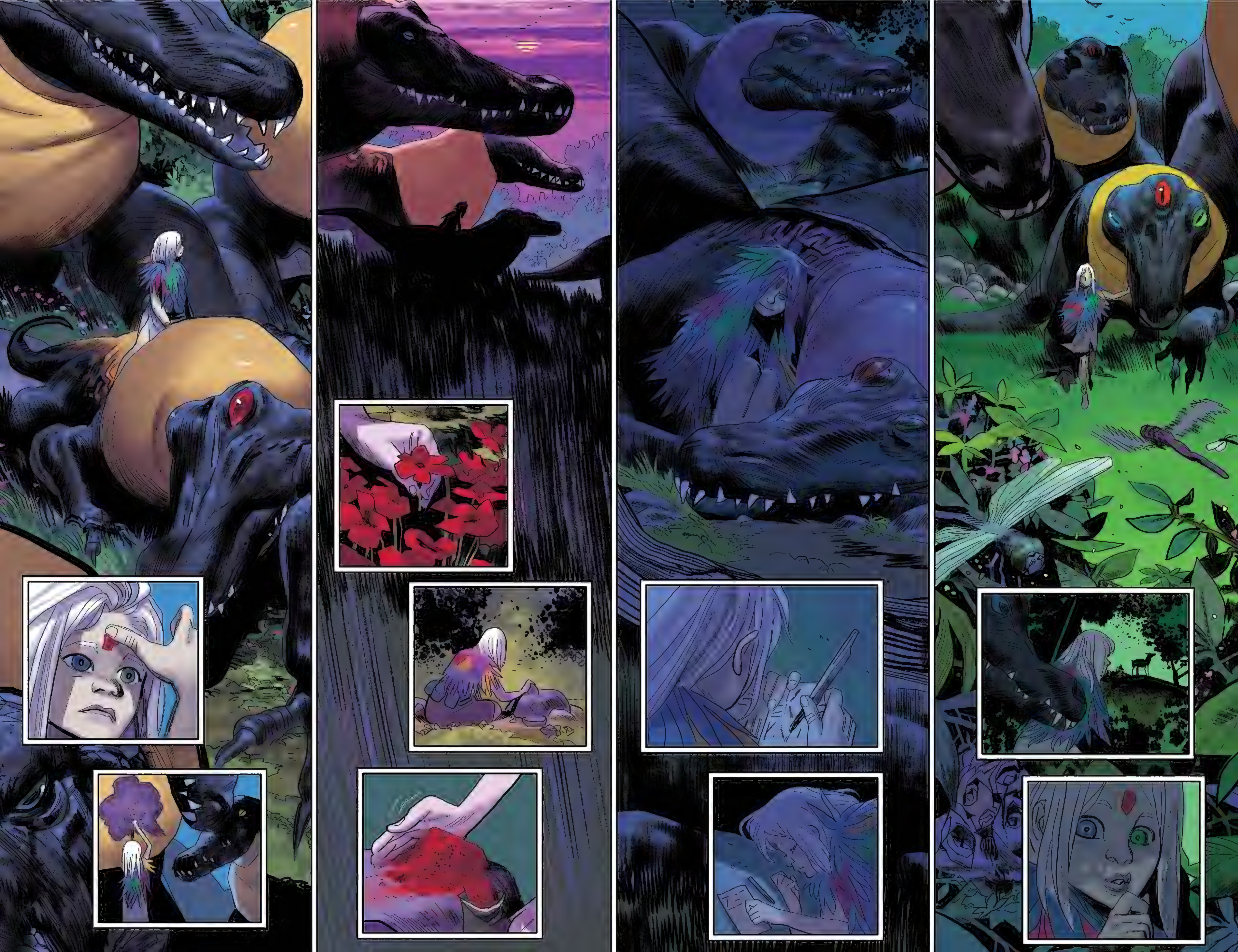


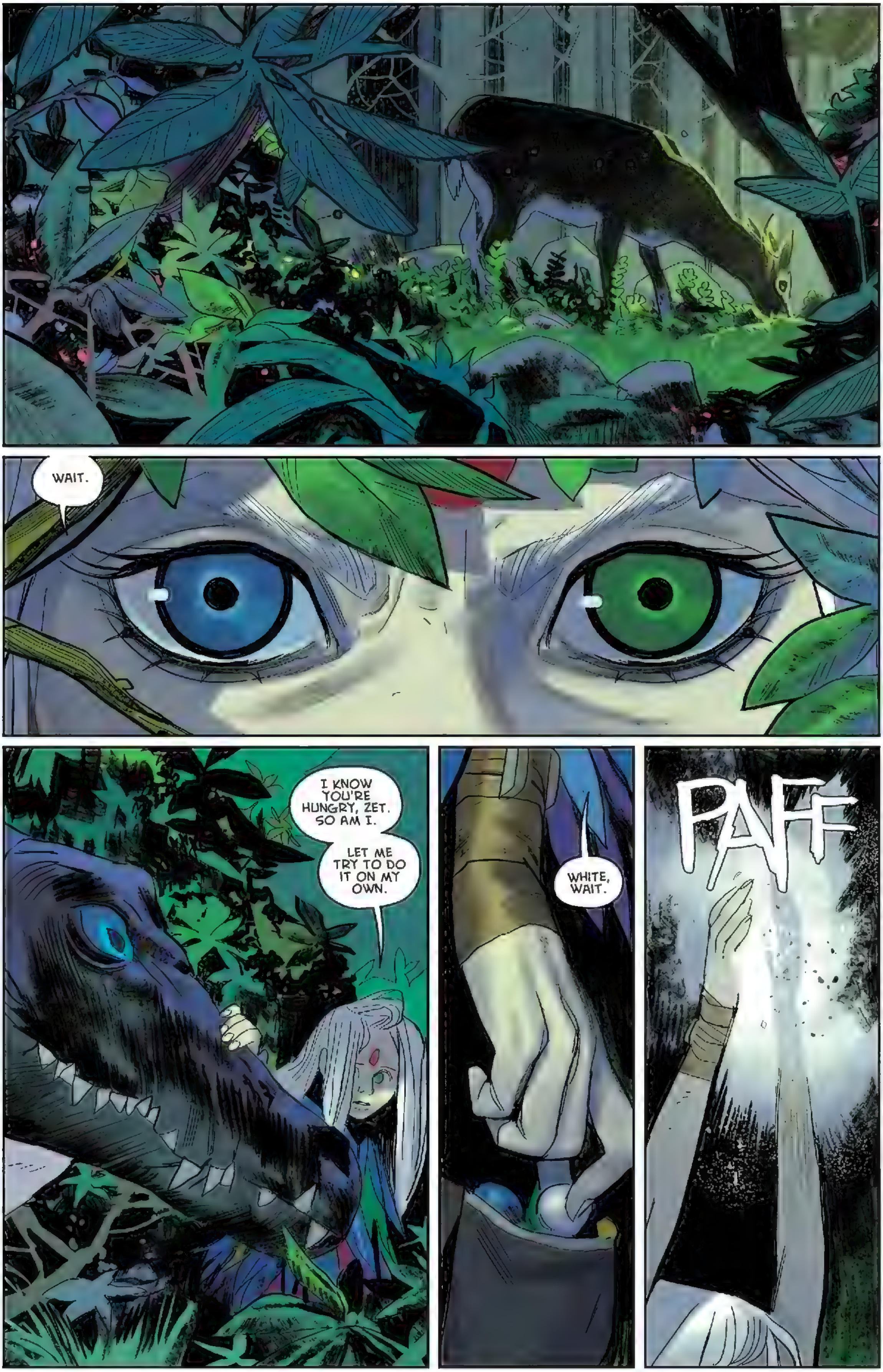


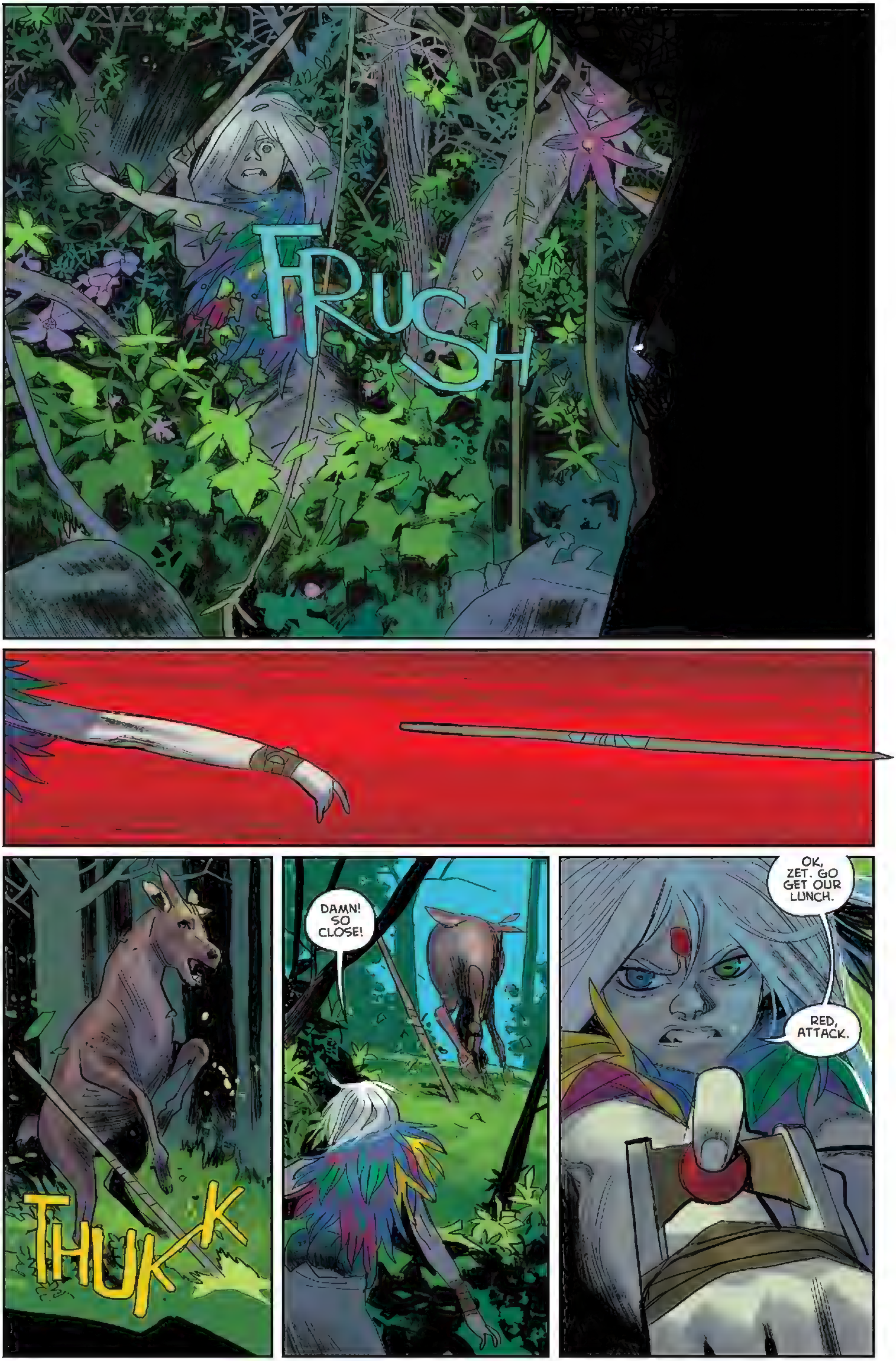


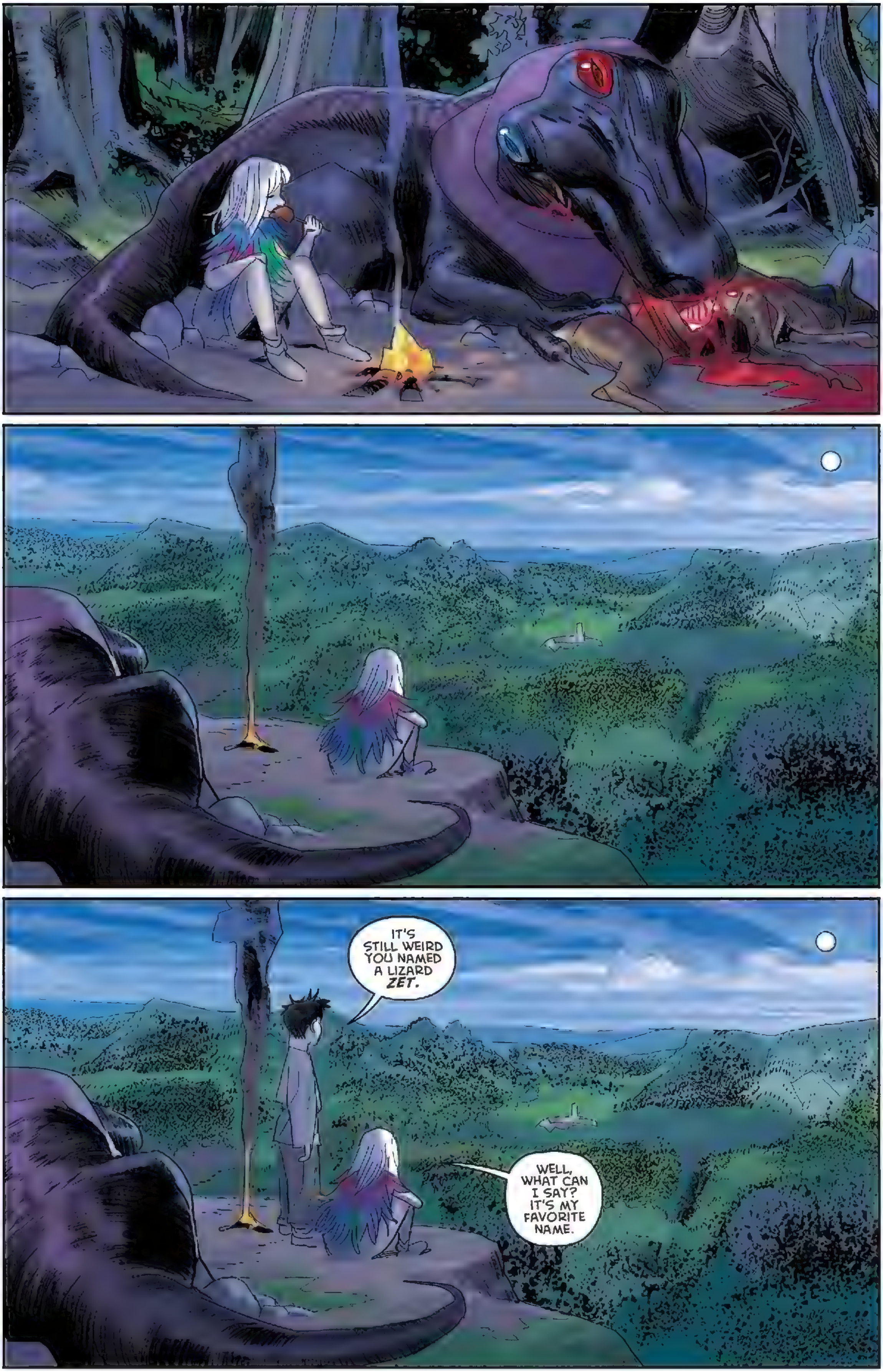

NO!
AW, COME ON, JUN. YOU GOTTA DO SOMETHING ABOUT THESE NIGHTMARES.
I KNOW, I KNOW... S-SORRY, GUYS.
THE BLACK EGG RITUAL IS IN TWO DAYS. THAT MEANS IT'S BEEN ALMOST A *FULL* YEAR SINCE ZET DIED...
I... I STILL CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING *SOMETHING'S WRONG*.
AGAIN WITH THAT? YOU HAVE TO STOP. LAST TIME YOU BROUGHT IT UP, THE MAKAVI ALMOST EXILED YOU.
YEAH, *THE MAKAVI*... HE'S BEEN ACTING *SO WEIRD!* I'VE SEEN HIM ALMOST EVERY NIGHT STANDING AT THE VERY TOP OF THE TOWER. *WHY IS THAT?*
I DON'T SEE GUARDS BRINGING FOOD TO THE TOWER ANYMORE. WHERE'S THE MONSTER *GONE?*
I TOLD YOU, I DON'T--
JUN!
IN TWO DAYS, YOU'LL SEE THE MONSTER HATCH FROM THE EGG, AND ALL THIS OTHER STUFF IS JUST IN YOUR HEAD.
NOW, *GO BACK TO SLEEP*.

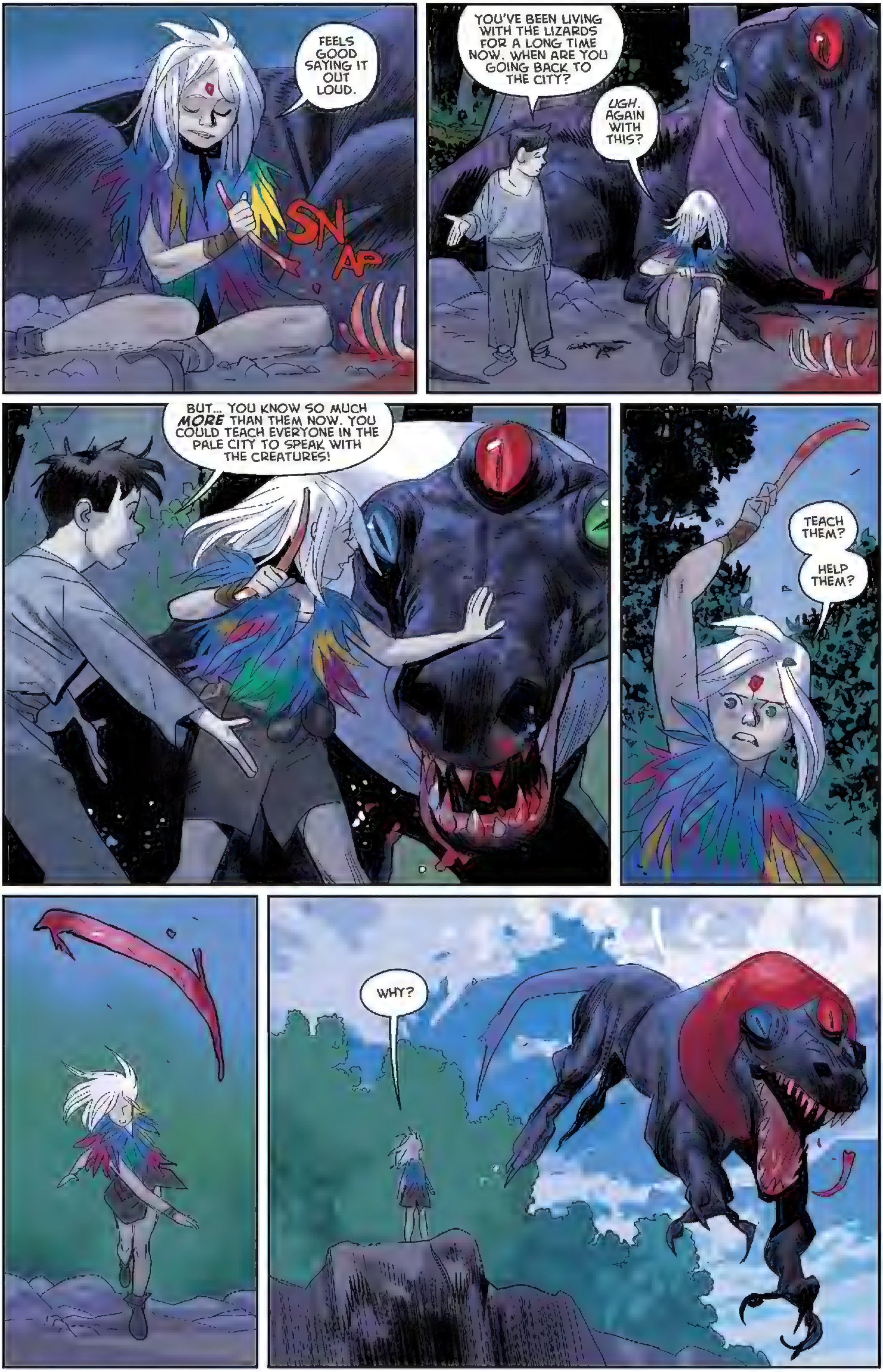

KNOK
KNOK
I WANT THE TRUTH.

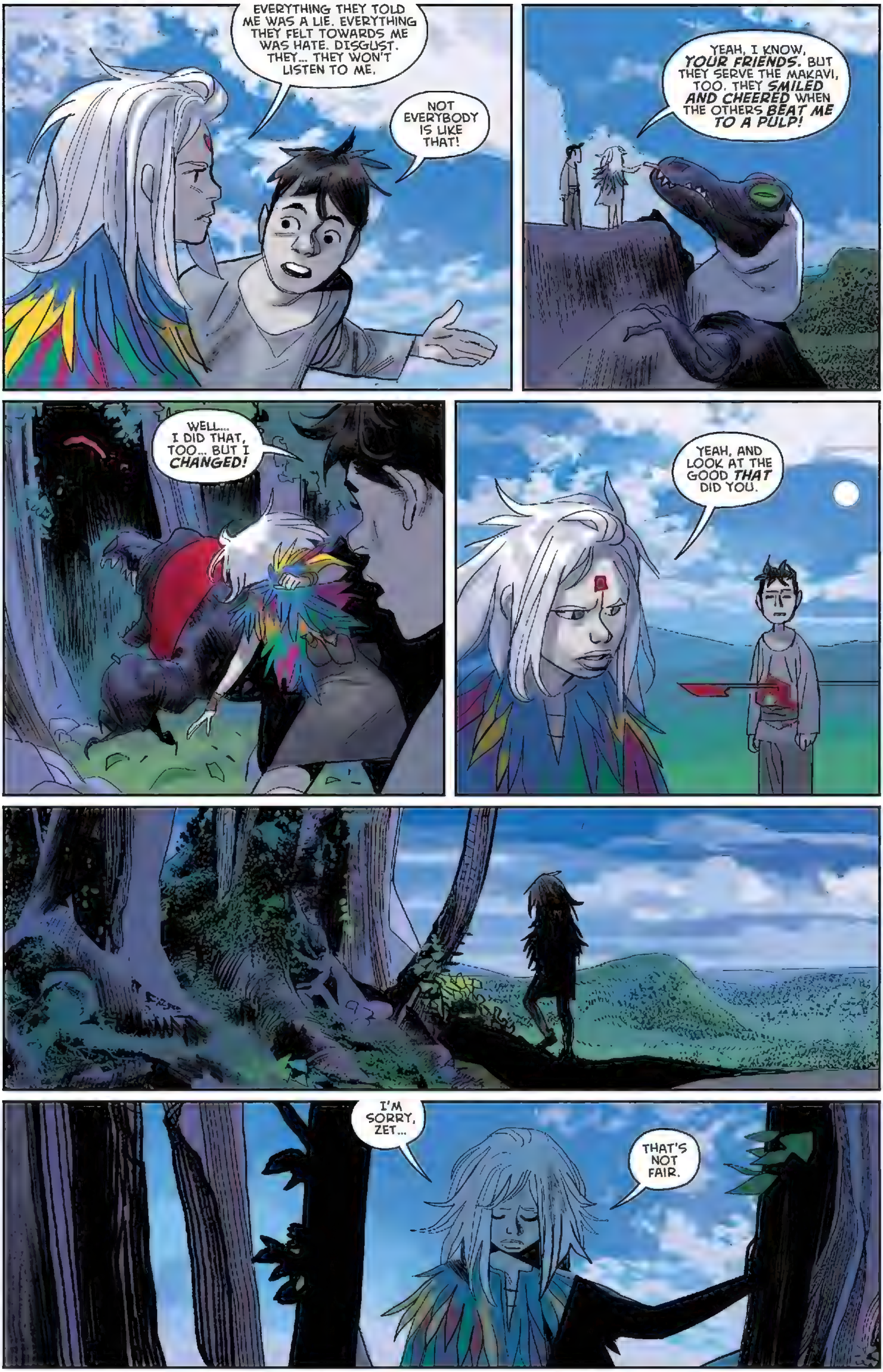


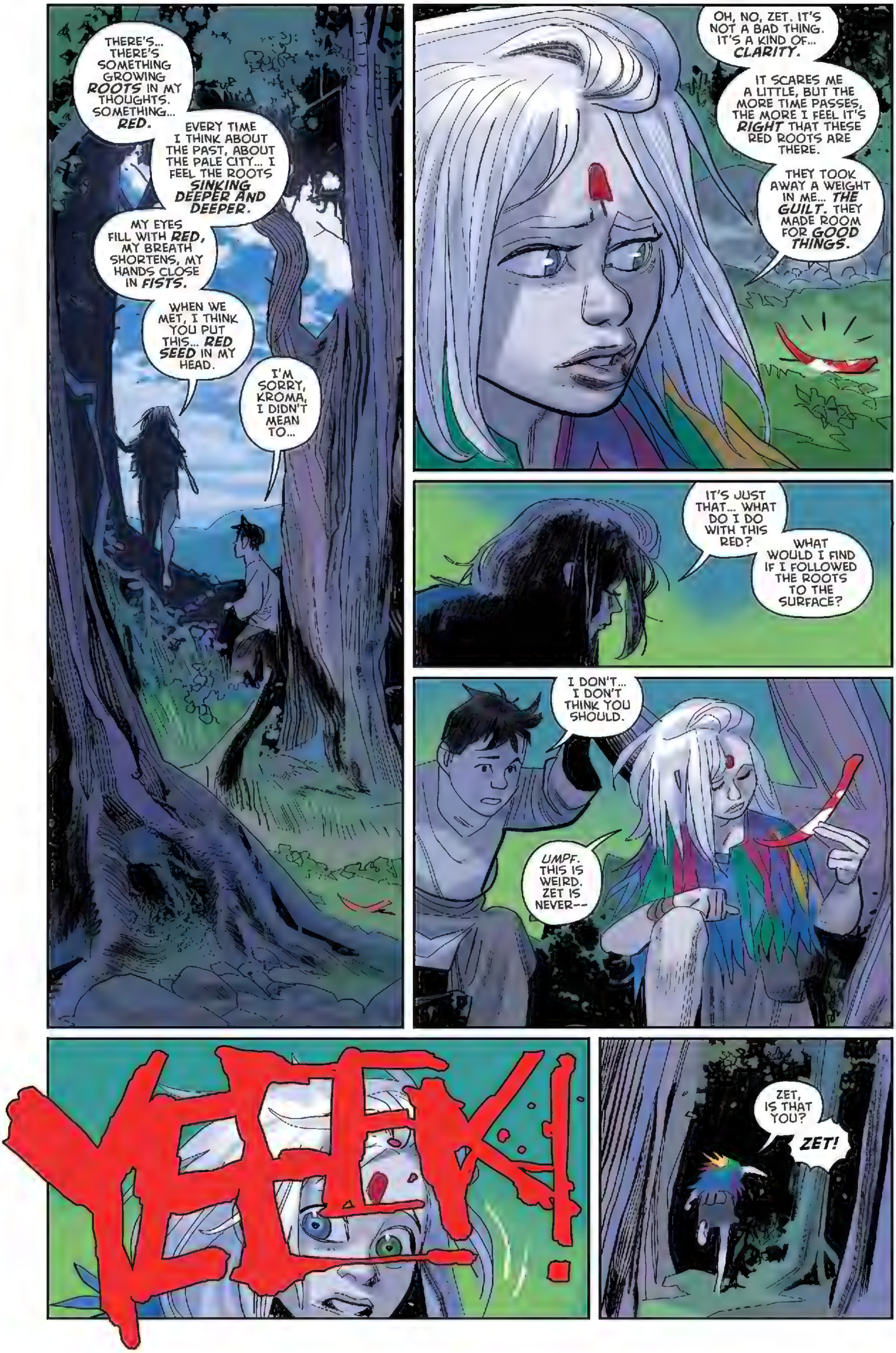

WAIT.
I KNOW YOU'RE HUNGRY, ZET. SO AM I.
LET ME TRY TO DO IT ON MY OWN.
WHITE, WAIT.
PAFF

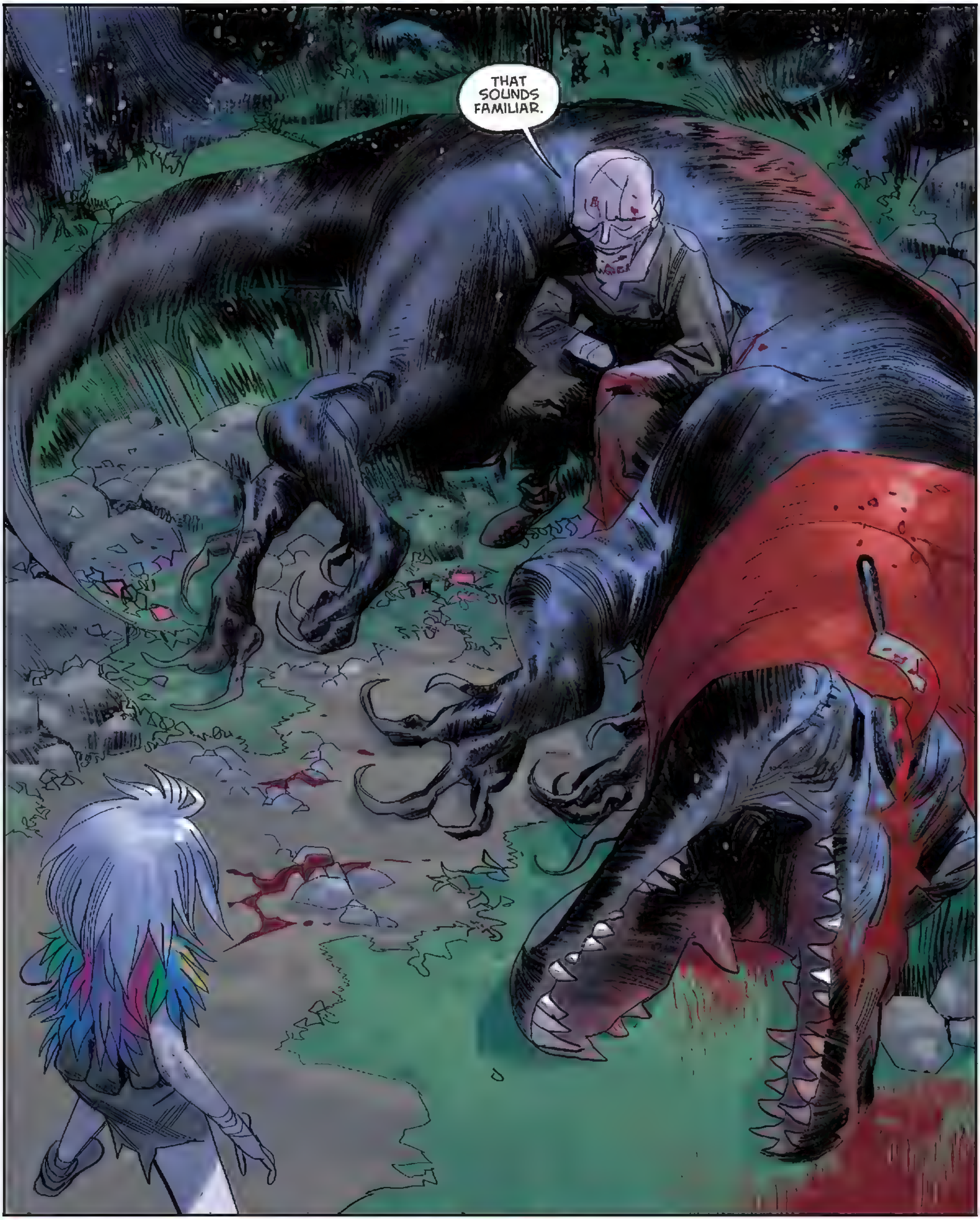

FRUSH
THUKK
DAMN! SO CLOSE!
OK, ZET. GO GET OUR LUNCH.
RED, ATTACK.

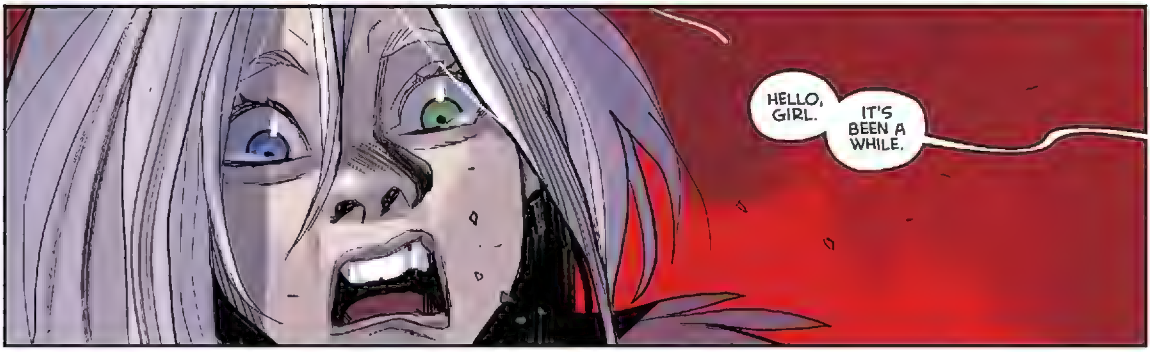

IT'S STILL WEIRD YOU NAMED A LIZARD *ZET*.
WELL, WHAT CAN I SAY? IT'S MY FAVORITE NAME.

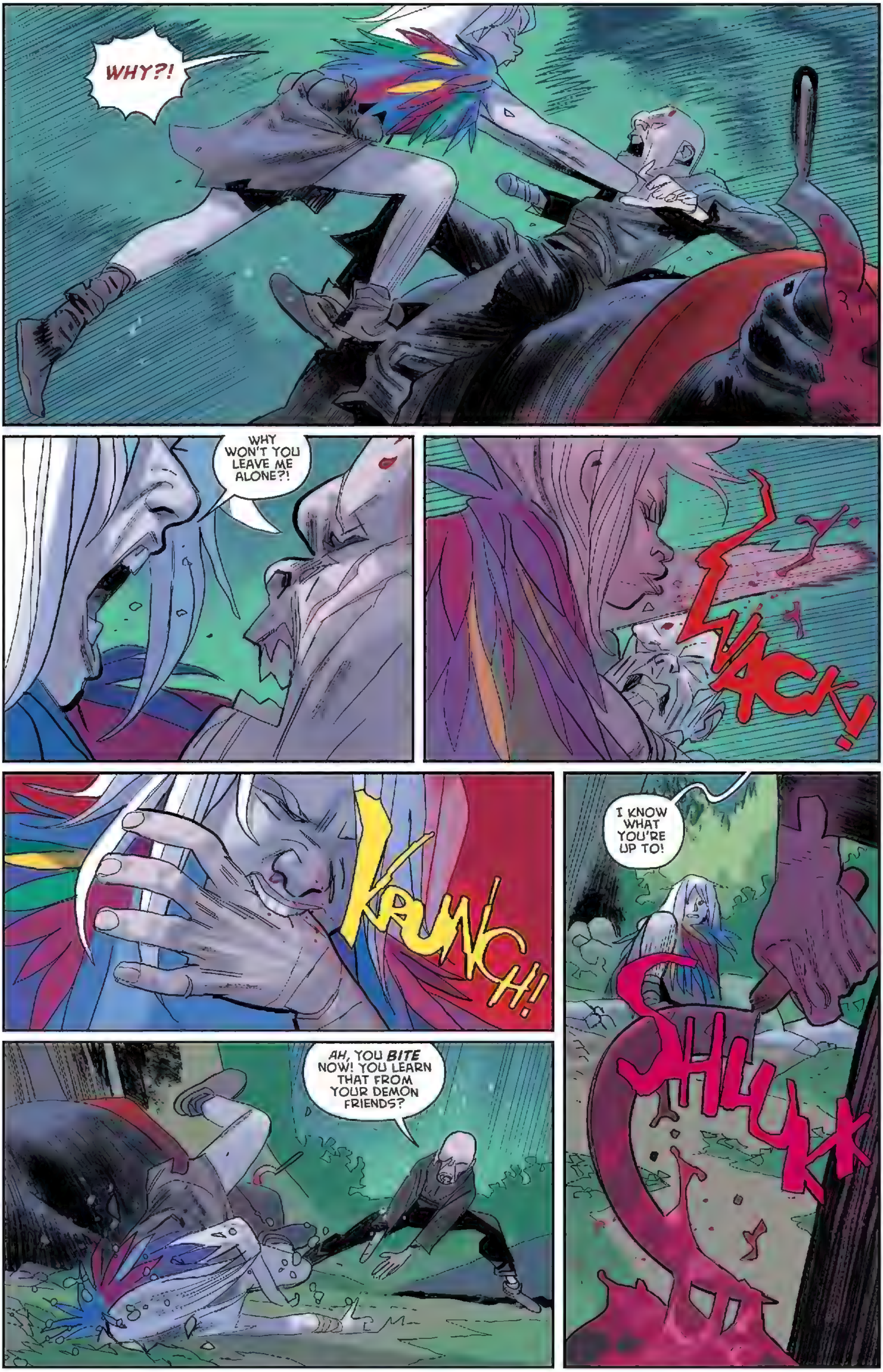

FEELS GOOD SAYING IT OUT LOUD.
SNAP
YOU'VE BEEN LIVING WITH THE LIZARDS FOR A LONG TIME NOW. WHEN ARE YOU GOING BACK TO THE CITY?
UGH. AGAIN WITH THIS?
BUT... YOU KNOW SO MUCH *MORE* THAN THEM NOW. YOU COULD TEACH EVERYONE IN THE PALE CITY TO SPEAK WITH THE CREATURES!
TEACH THEM?
HELP THEM?
WHY?

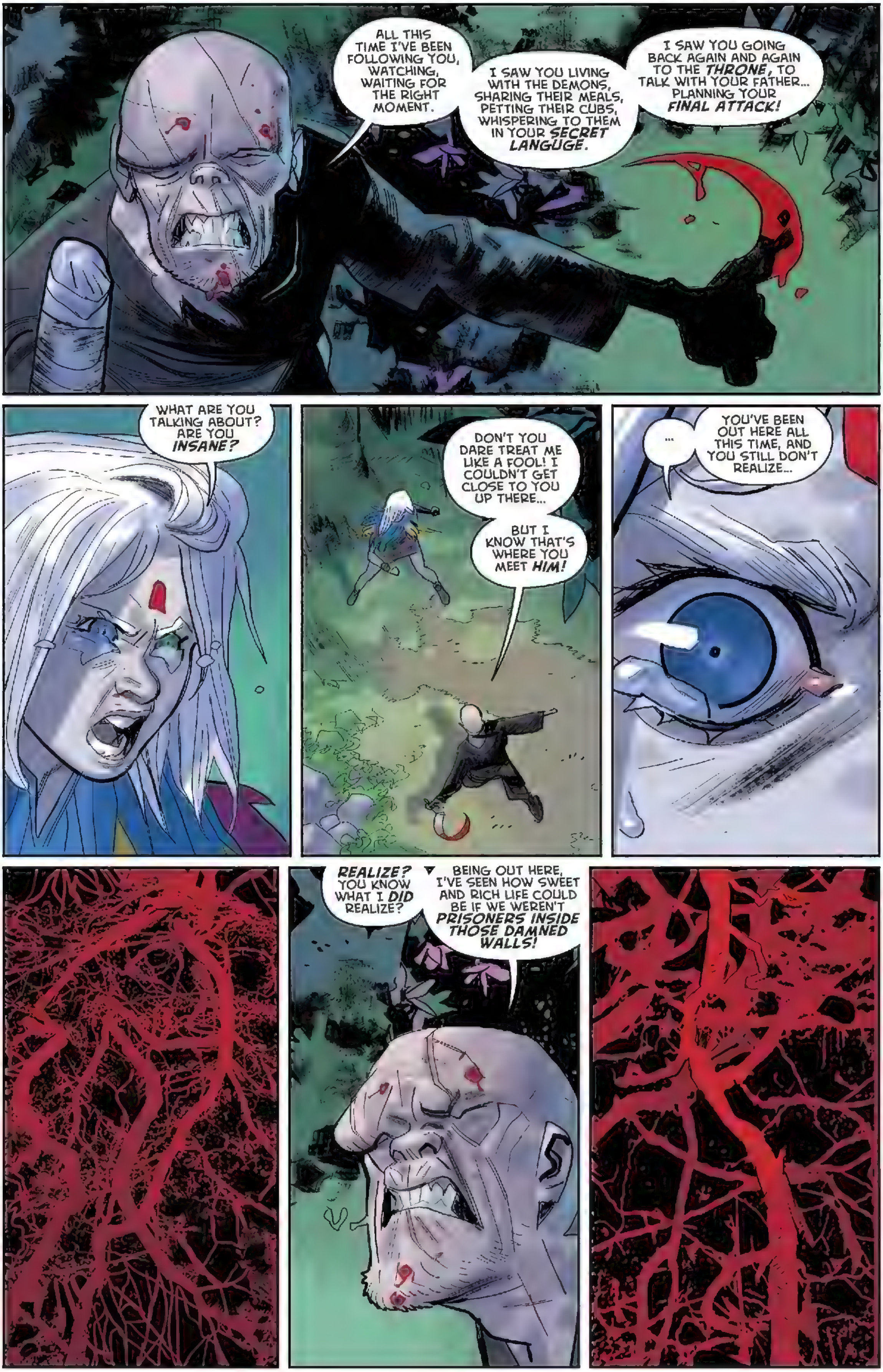

EVERYTHING THEY TOLD ME WAS A LIE. EVERYTHING THEY FELT TOWARDS ME WAS HATE. DISGUST. THEY... THEY WON'T LISTEN TO ME.
NOT EVERYBODY IS LIKE THAT!
YEAH, I KNOW, ***YOUR FRIENDS.*** BUT THEY SERVE THE MAKAVI, TOO. THEY ***SMILED AND CHEERED*** WHEN THE OTHERS ***BEAT ME TO A PULP!***
WELL... I DID THAT, TOO... BUT I ***CHANGED!***
YEAH, AND LOOK AT THE GOOD ***THAT*** DID YOU.
I'M SORRY, ZET...
THAT'S NOT FAIR.

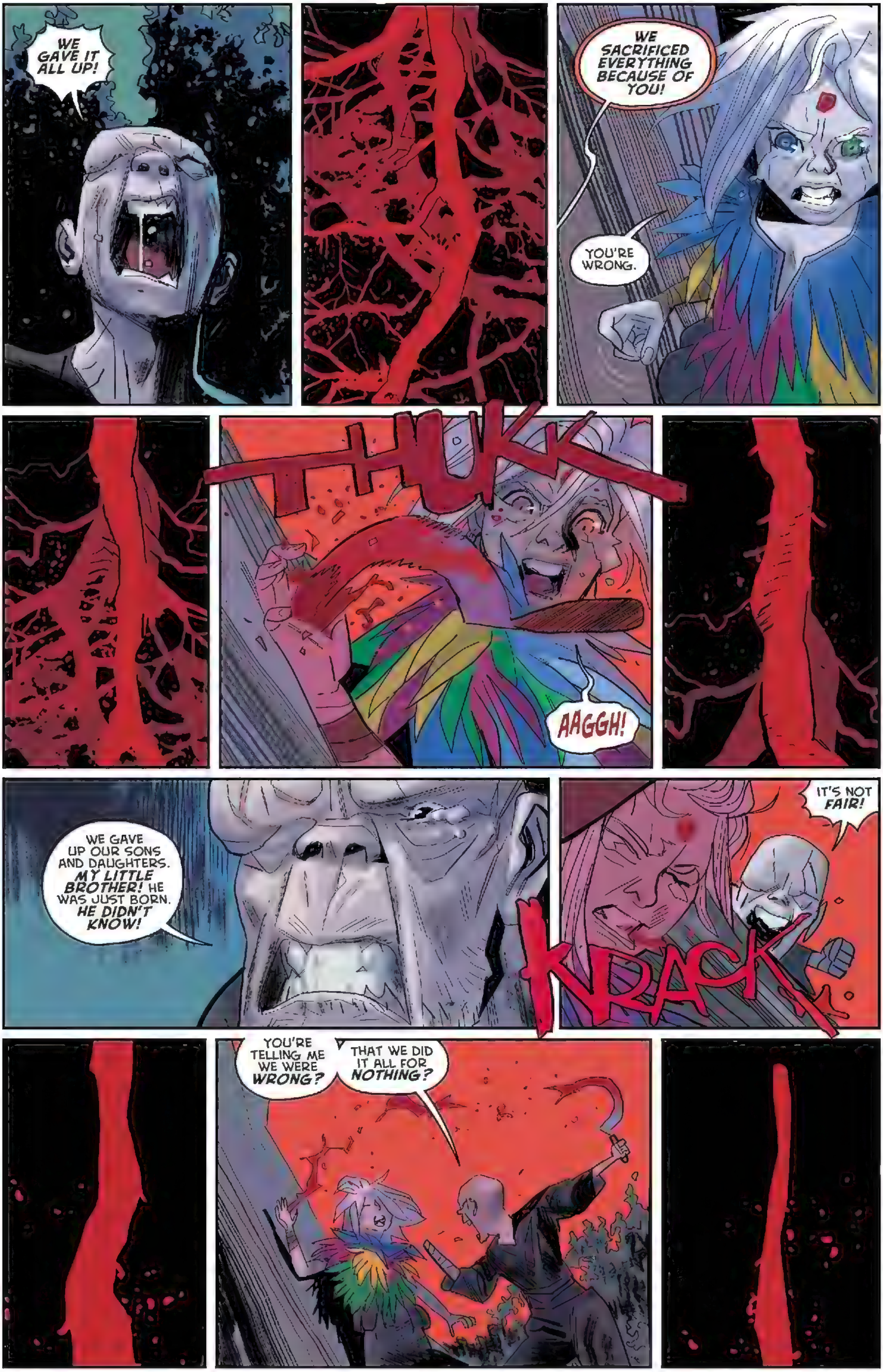

THERE'S... THERE'S SOMETHING GROWING *ROOTS* IN MY THOUGHTS. SOMETHING... *RED*.
EVERY TIME I THINK ABOUT THE PAST, ABOUT THE PALE CITY... I FEEL THE ROOTS *SINKING DEEPER AND DEEPER*.
MY EYES FILL WITH *RED*, MY BREATH SHORTENS, MY HANDS CLOSE IN *FISTS*.
WHEN WE MET, I THINK YOU PUT THIS... *RED SEED* IN MY HEAD.
I'M SORRY, KROMA, I DIDN'T MEAN TO...
OH, NO, ZET. IT'S NOT A BAD THING. IT'S A KIND OF... *CLARITY*.
IT SCARES ME A LITTLE, BUT THE MORE TIME PASSES, THE MORE I FEEL IT'S *RIGHT* THAT THESE RED ROOTS ARE THERE.
THEY TOOK AWAY A WEIGHT IN ME... *THE GUILT*. THEY MADE ROOM FOR *GOOD THINGS*.
IT'S JUST THAT... WHAT DO I DO WITH THIS RED?
WHAT WOULD I FIND IF I FOLLOWED THE ROOTS TO THE SURFACE?
I DON'T... I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD.
UMPF. THIS IS WEIRD. ZET IS NEVER--
YEEEK!
ZET, IS THAT YOU?
ZET!

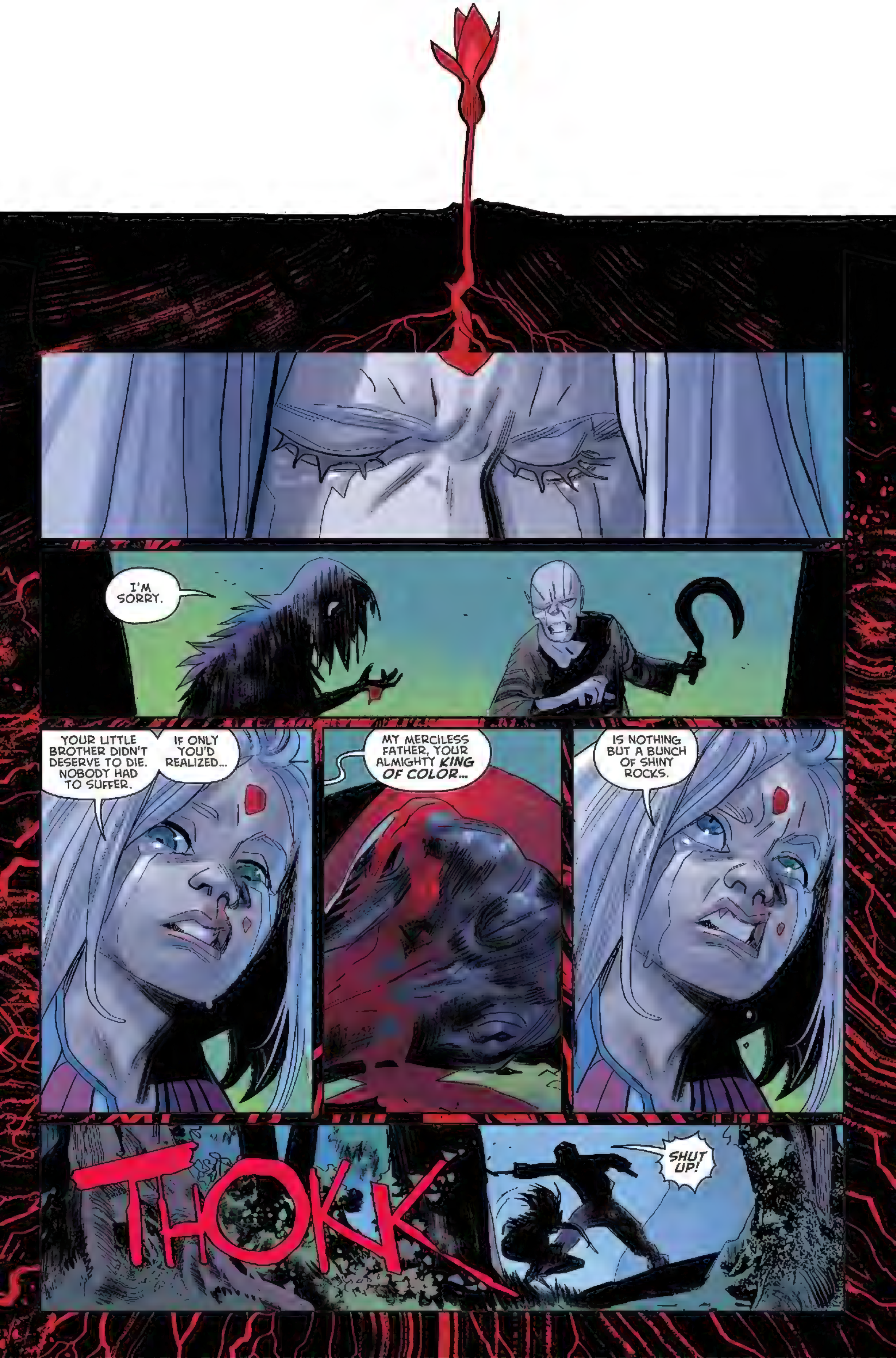

THAT SOUNDS FAMILIAR.

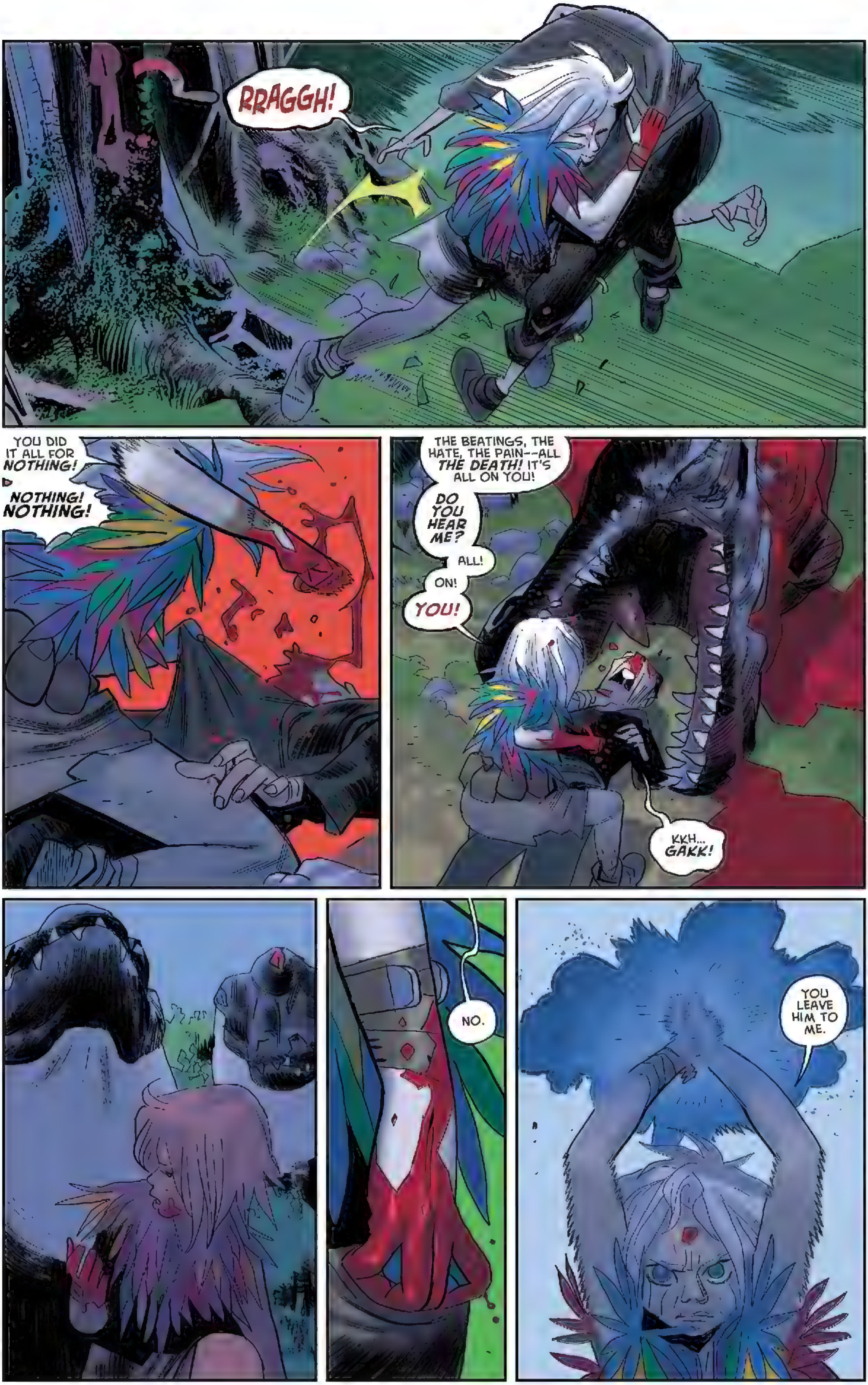

HELLO, GIRL.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

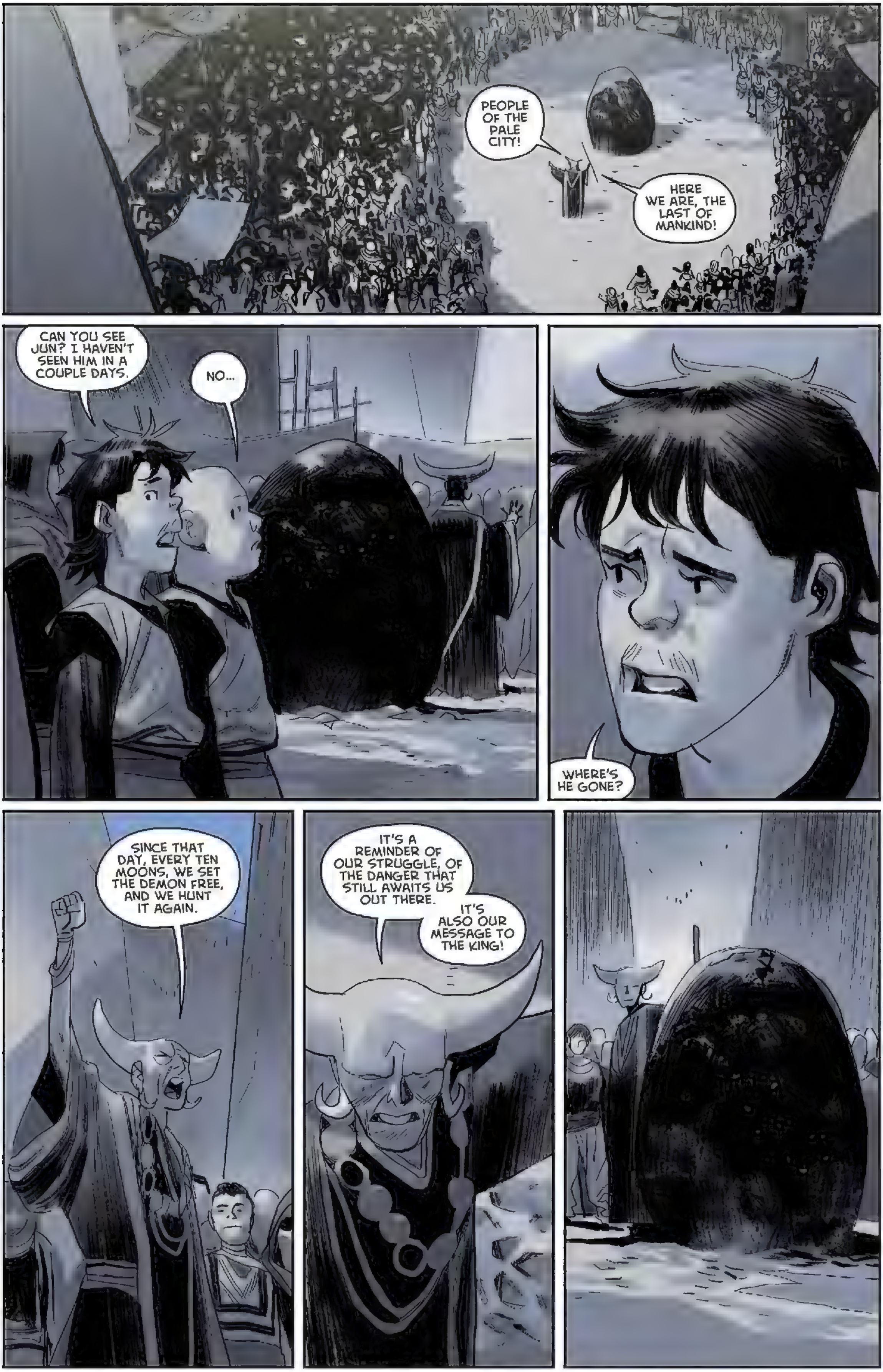

WHY?!
WHY WON'T YOU LEAVE ME ALONE?!
SHACK!
KRUNCH!
AH, YOU *BITE* NOW! YOU LEARN THAT FROM YOUR DEMON FRIENDS?
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO!
SHUKK

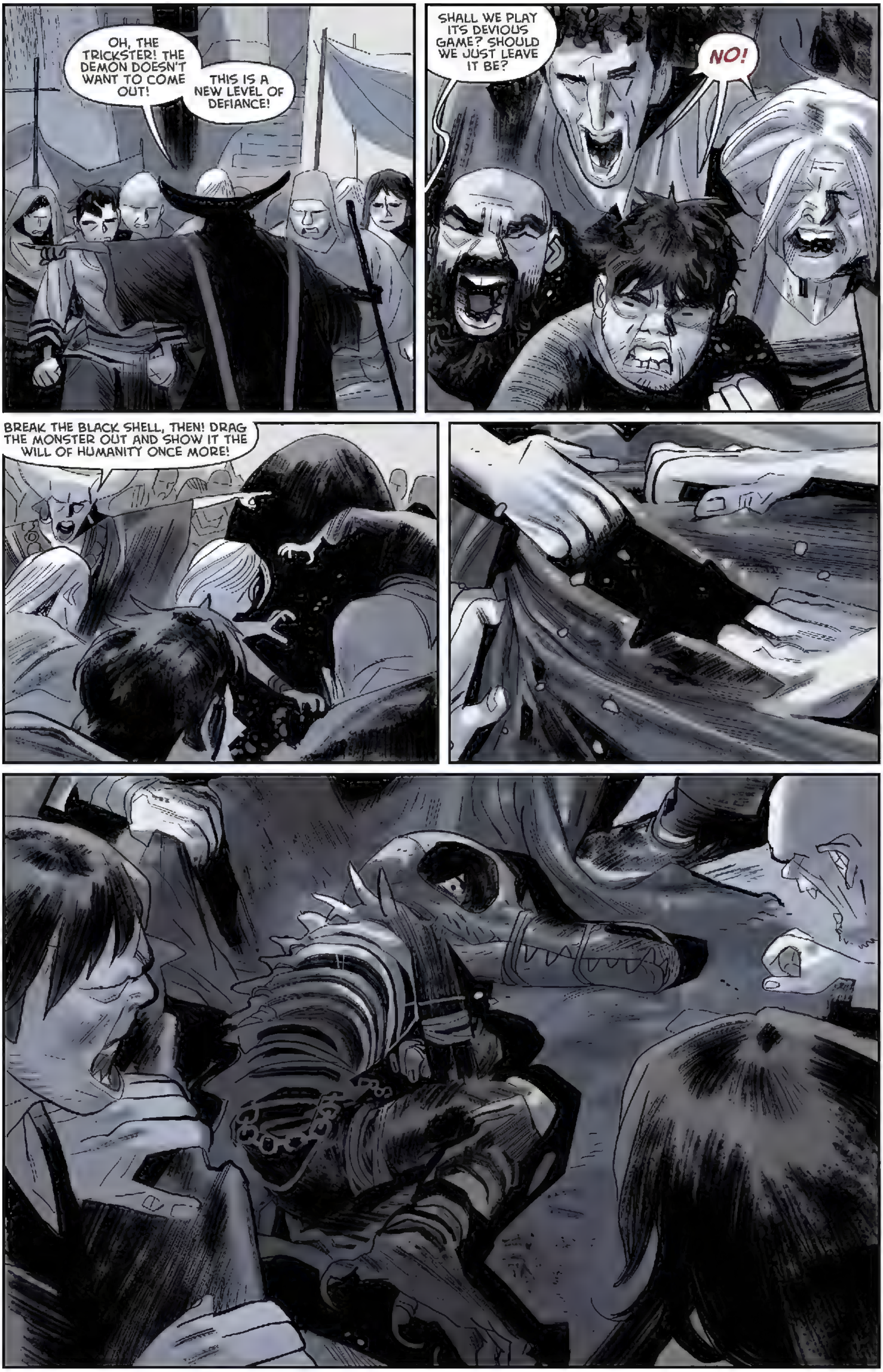

ALL THIS TIME I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING YOU, WATCHING, WAITING FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT.
I SAW YOU LIVING WITH THE DEMONS, SHARING THEIR MEALS, PETTING THEIR CUBS, WHISPERING TO THEM IN YOUR *SECRET LANGUGE.*
I SAW YOU GOING BACK AGAIN AND AGAIN TO THE *THRONE,* TO TALK WITH YOUR FATHER... PLANNING YOUR *FINAL ATTACK!*
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? ARE YOU *INSANE?*
DON'T YOU DARE TREAT ME LIKE A FOOL! I COULDN'T GET CLOSE TO YOU UP THERE...
BUT I KNOW THAT'S WHERE YOU MEET *HIM!*
...
YOU'VE BEEN OUT HERE ALL THIS TIME, AND YOU STILL DON'T REALIZE...
REALIZE? YOU KNOW WHAT I *DID* REALIZE?
BEING OUT HERE, I'VE SEEN HOW SWEET AND RICH LIFE COULD BE IF WE WEREN'T *PRISONERS INSIDE THOSE DAMNED WALLS!*

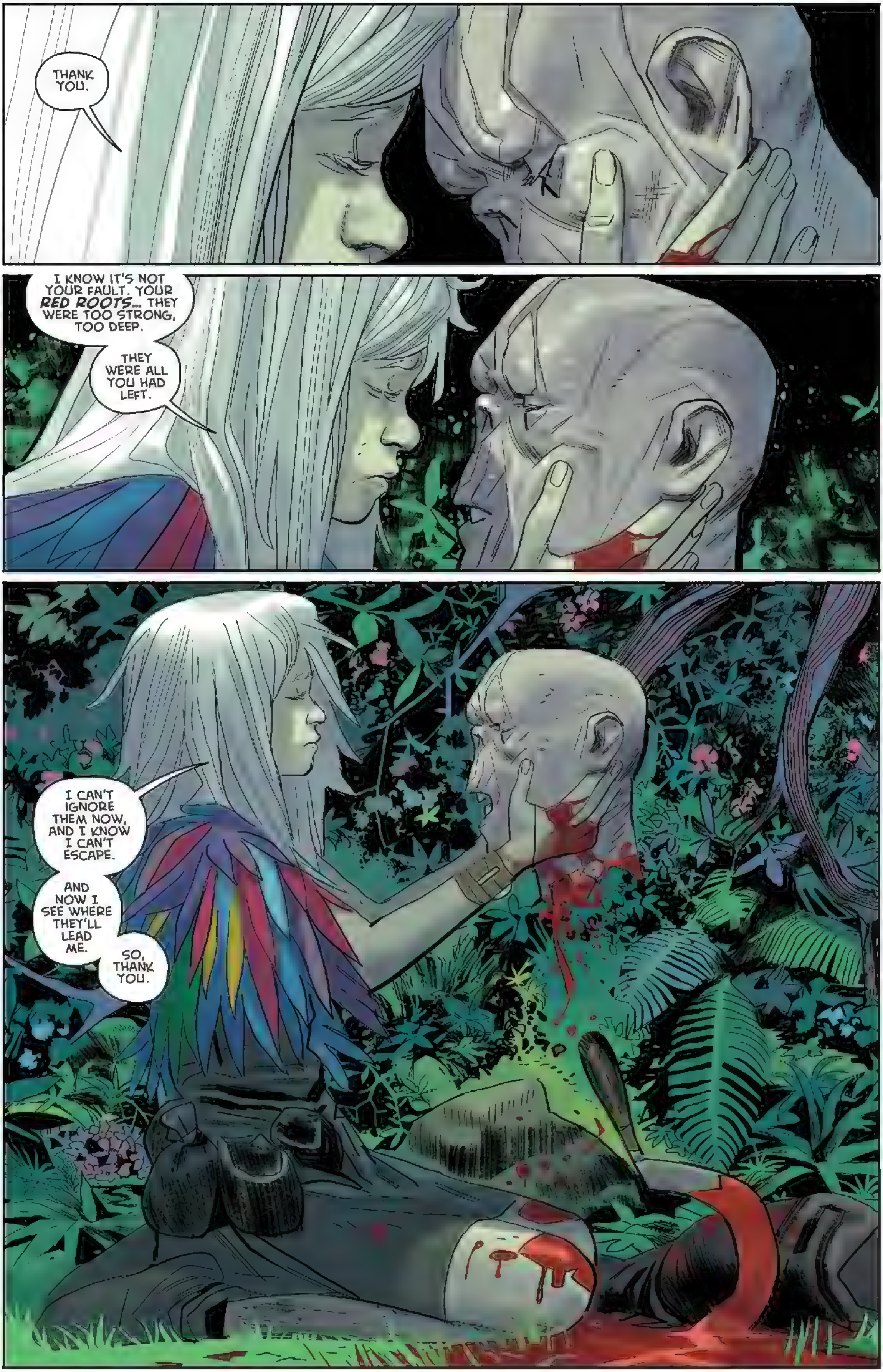

WE GAVE IT ALL UP!
WE SACRIFICED EVERYTHING BECAUSE OF YOU!
YOU'RE WRONG.
THUKK
AAGGH!
WE GAVE UP OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS. MY LITTLE BROTHER! HE WAS JUST BORN. HE DIDN'T KNOW!
IT'S NOT FAIR!
KRACK
YOU'RE TELLING ME WE WERE WRONG?
THAT WE DID IT ALL FOR NOTHING?

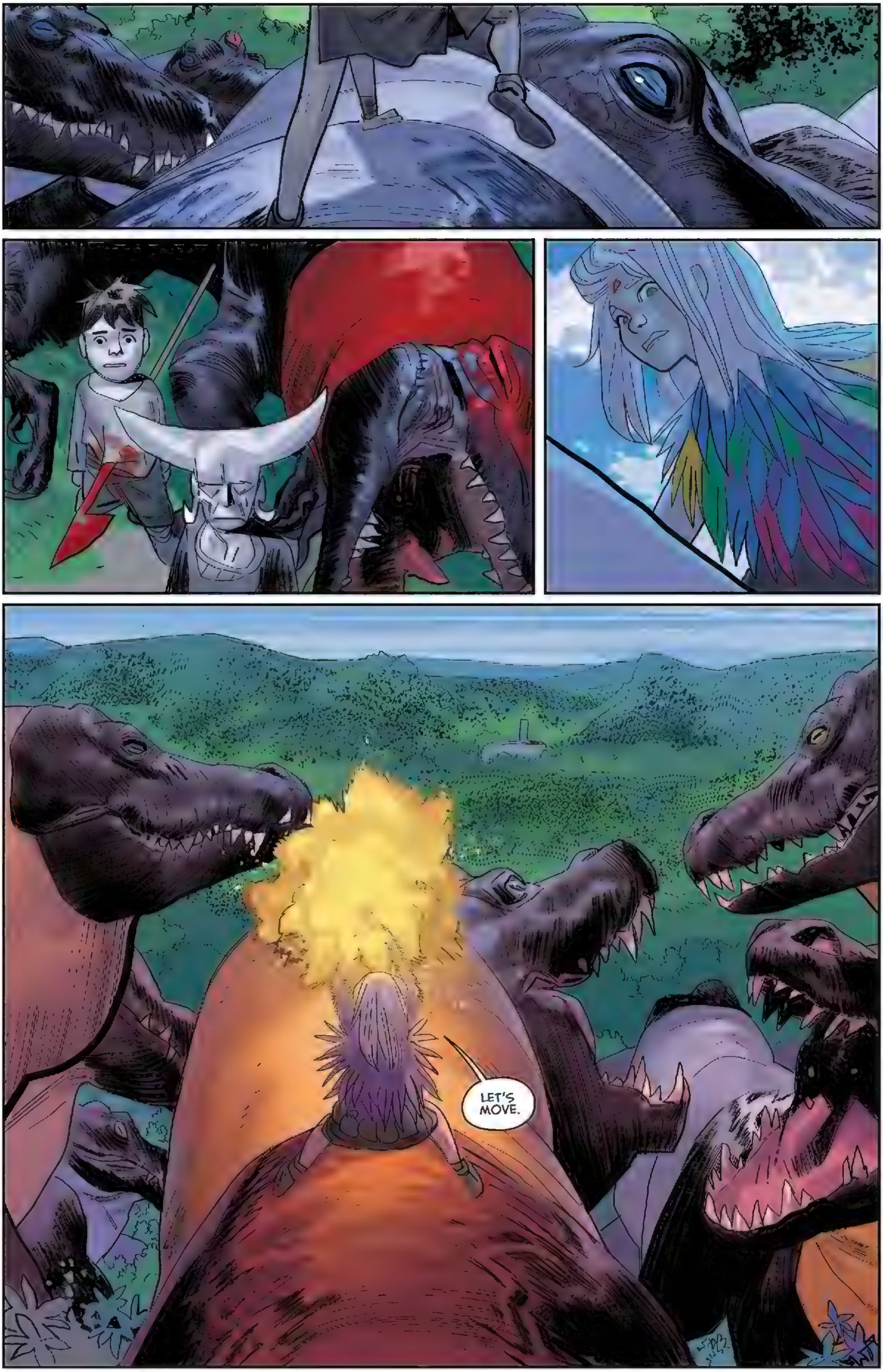

I'M SORRY.
YOUR LITTLE BROTHER DIDN'T DESERVE TO DIE. NOBODY HAD TO SUFFER.
IF ONLY YOU'D REALIZED...
MY MERCILESS FATHER, YOUR ALMIGHTY KING OF COLOR...
IS NOTHING BUT A BUNCH OF SHINY ROCKS.
THOKK
SHUT UP!

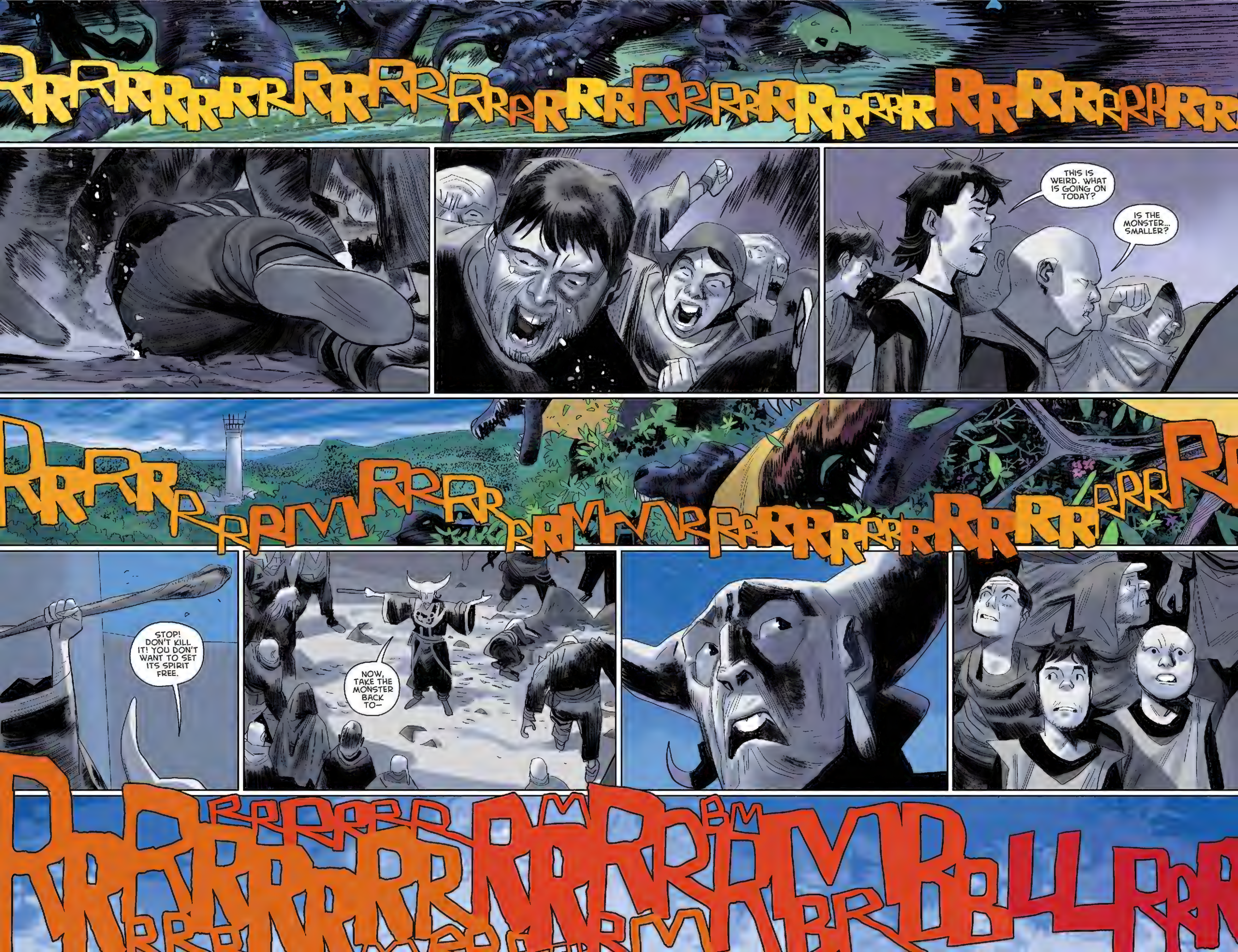

RRAGGH!
YOU DID IT ALL FOR NOTHING!
NOTHING! NOTHING!
THE BEATINGS, THE HATE, THE PAIN--ALL THE DEATH! IT'S ALL ON YOU!
DO YOU HEAR ME?
ALL!
ON!
YOU!
KKH... GAKK!
NO.
YOU LEAVE HIM TO ME.

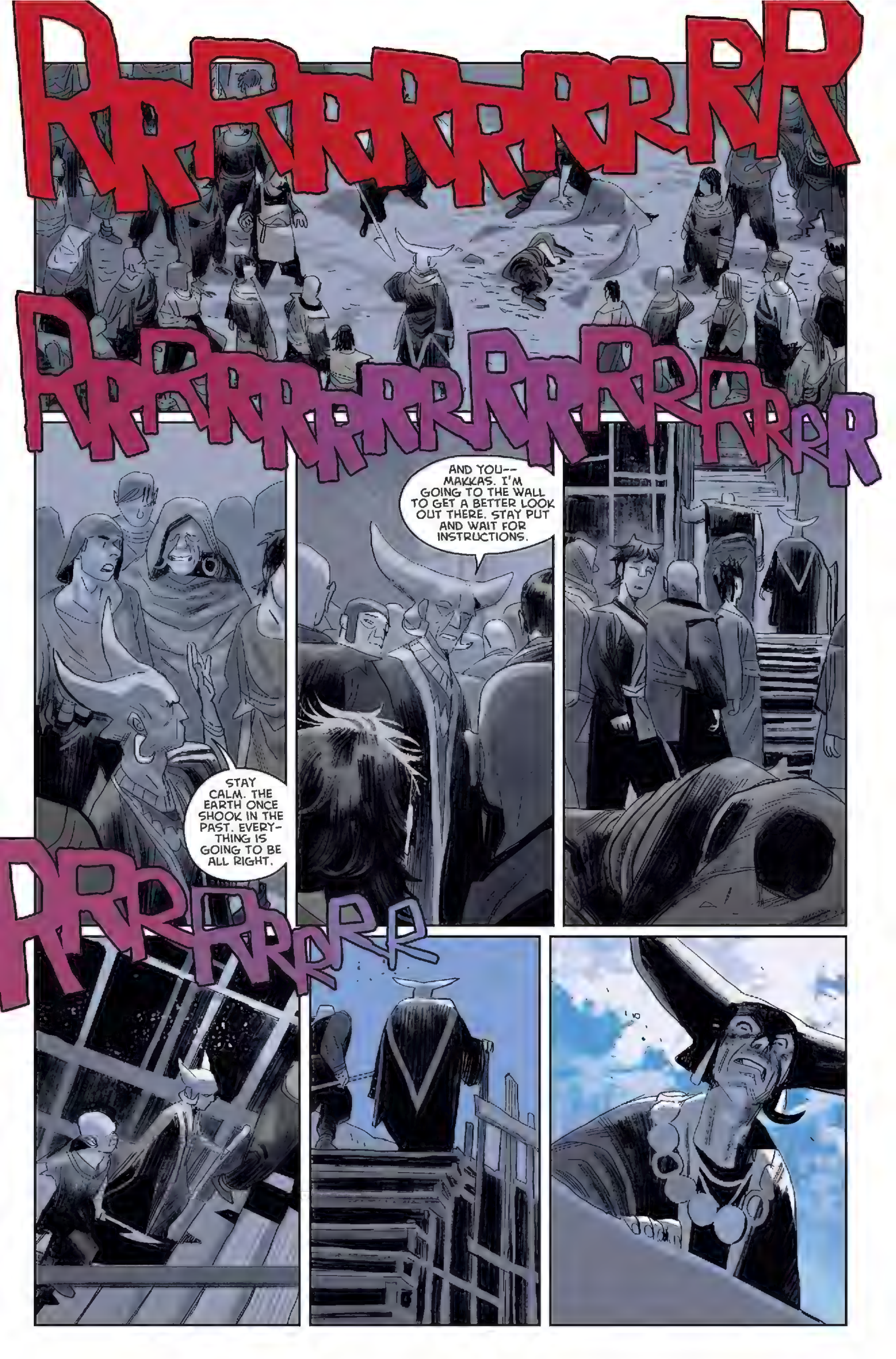

PEOPLE OF THE PALE CITY!
HERE WE ARE, THE LAST OF MANKIND!
CAN YOU SEE JUN? I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN A COUPLE DAYS.
NO...
WHERE'S HE GONE?
SINCE THAT DAY, EVERY TEN MOONS, WE SET THE DEMON FREE, AND WE HUNT IT AGAIN.
IT'S A REMINDER OF OUR STRUGGLE, OF THE DANGER THAT STILL AWAITS US OUT THERE.
IT'S ALSO OUR MESSAGE TO THE KING!

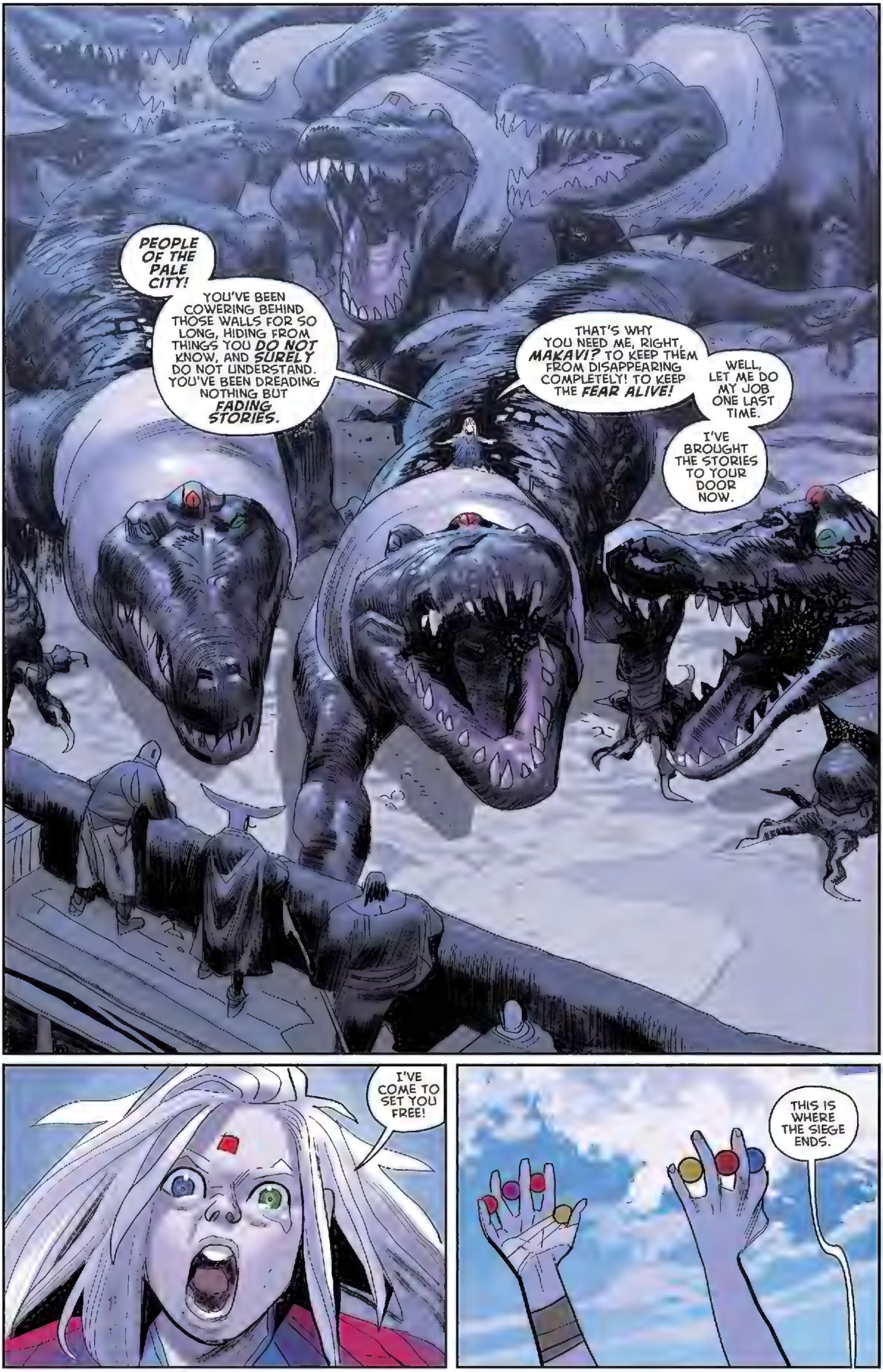

OH, THE TRICKSTER! THE DEMON DOESN'T WANT TO COME OUT!
THIS IS A NEW LEVEL OF DEFIANCE!
SHALL WE PLAY ITS DEVIOUS GAME? SHOULD WE JUST LEAVE IT BE?
NO!
BREAK THE BLACK SHELL, THEN! DRAG THE MONSTER OUT AND SHOW IT THE WILL OF HUMANITY ONCE MORE!

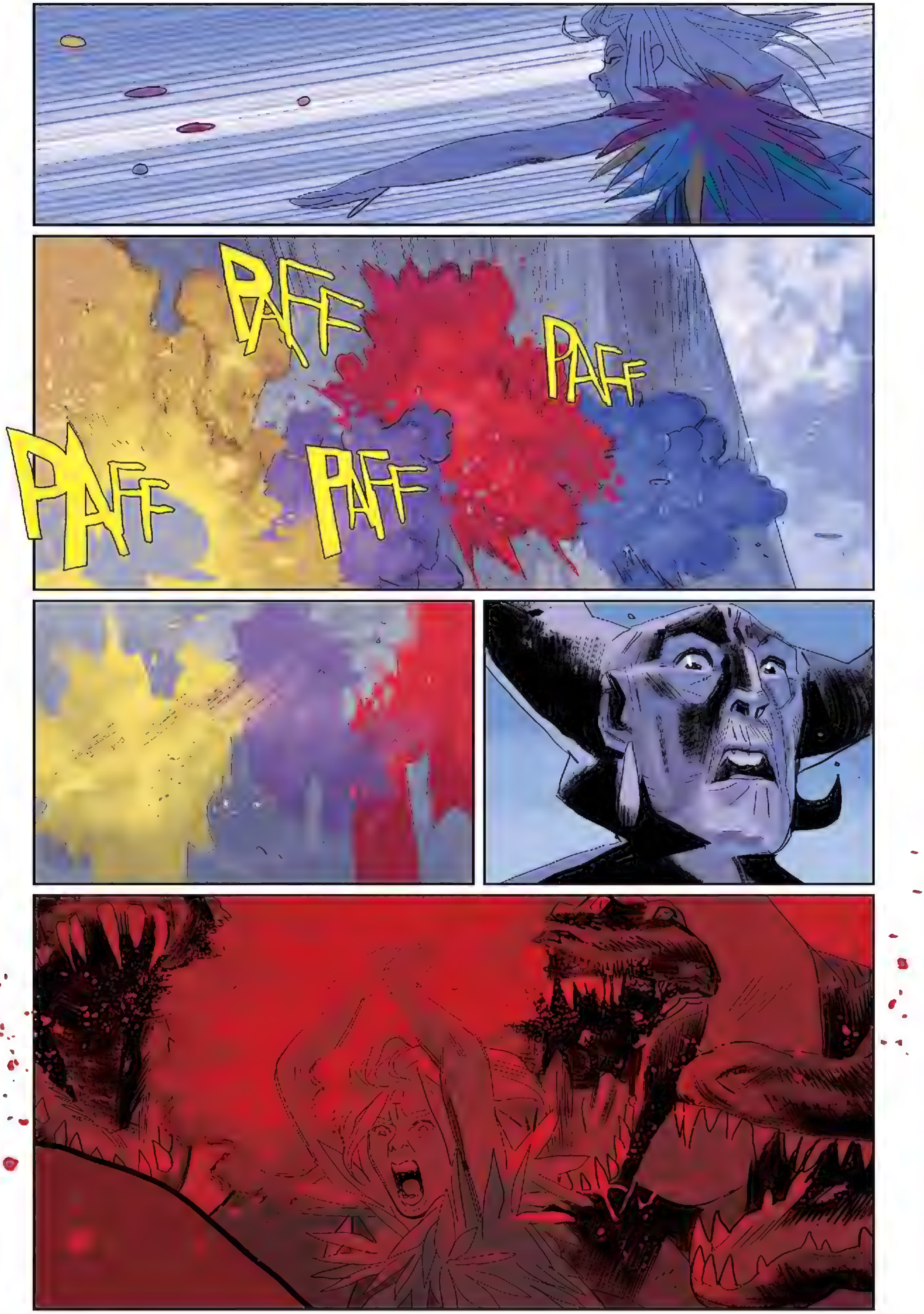

THANK YOU.
I KNOW IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT. YOUR RED ROOTS... THEY WERE TOO STRONG, TOO DEEP.
THEY WERE ALL YOU HAD LEFT.
I CAN'T IGNORE THEM NOW, AND I KNOW I CAN'T ESCAPE.
AND NOW I SEE WHERE THEY'LL LEAD ME.
SO, THANK YOU.


LET'S MOVE.


THIS IS WEIRD. WHAT IS GOING ON TODAY?
IS THE MONSTER... SMALLER?
STOP! DON'T KILL IT! YOU DON'T WANT TO SET ITS SPIRIT FREE.
NOW, TAKE THE MONSTER BACK TO—


RRRRRRRRRRRRR
RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR
AND YOU-- MAKKAS. I'M GOING TO THE WALL TO GET A BETTER LOOK OUT THERE. STAY PUT AND WAIT FOR INSTRUCTIONS.
STAY CALM. THE EARTH ONCE SHOOK IN THE PAST. EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.
RRRRRRRR


PEOPLE OF THE PALE CITY!
YOU'VE BEEN COWERING BEHIND THOSE WALLS FOR SO LONG, HIDING FROM THINGS YOU *DO NOT* KNOW, AND *SURELY* DO NOT UNDERSTAND. YOU'VE BEEN DREADING NOTHING BUT *FADING STORIES.*
THAT'S WHY YOU NEED ME, RIGHT, *MAKAVI?* TO KEEP THEM FROM DISAPPEARING COMPLETELY! TO KEEP THE *FEAR ALIVE!*
WELL, LET ME DO MY JOB ONE LAST TIME.
I'VE BROUGHT THE STORIES TO YOUR DOOR NOW.
I'VE COME TO SET YOU FREE!
THIS IS WHERE THE SIEGE ENDS.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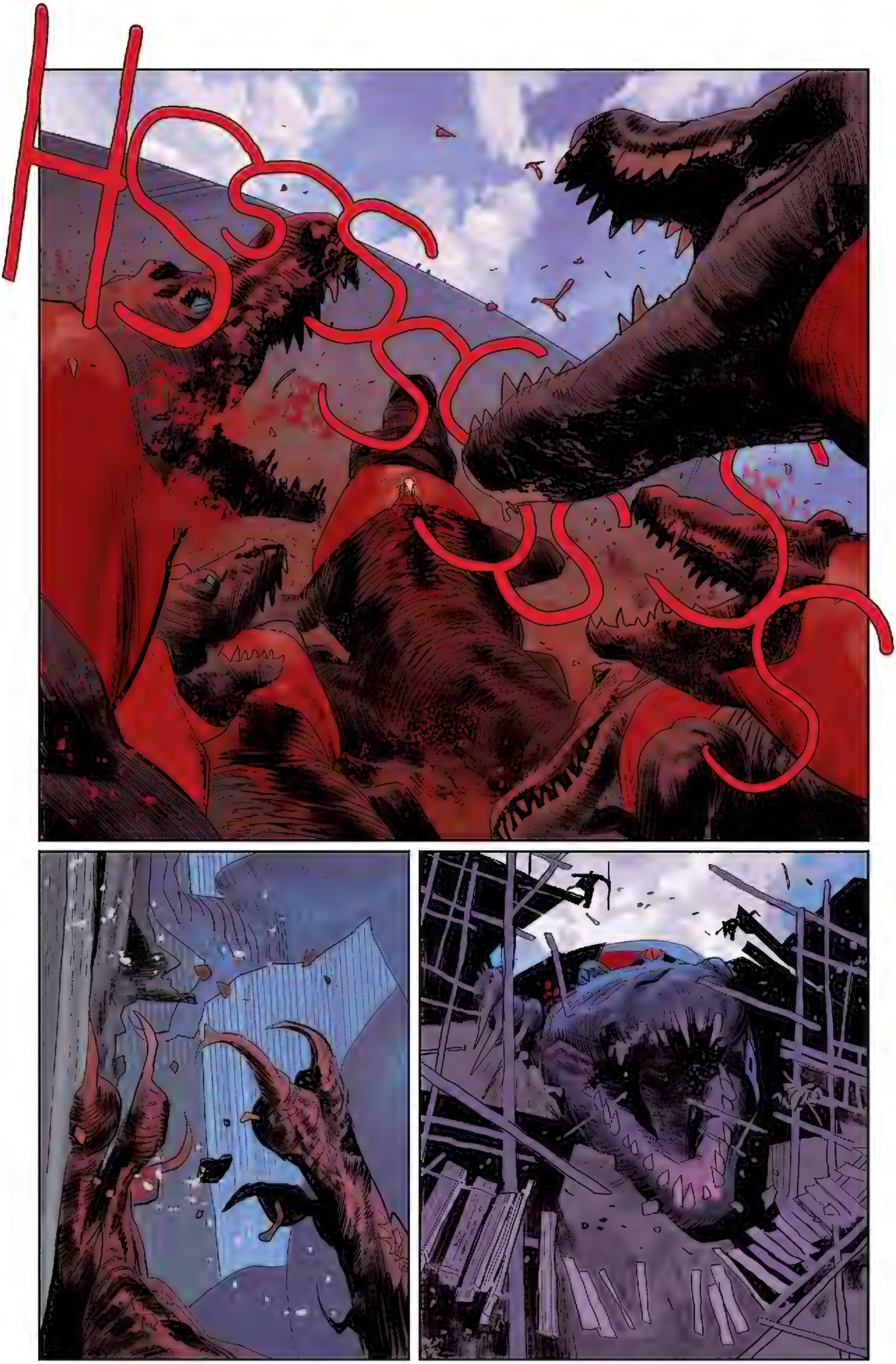
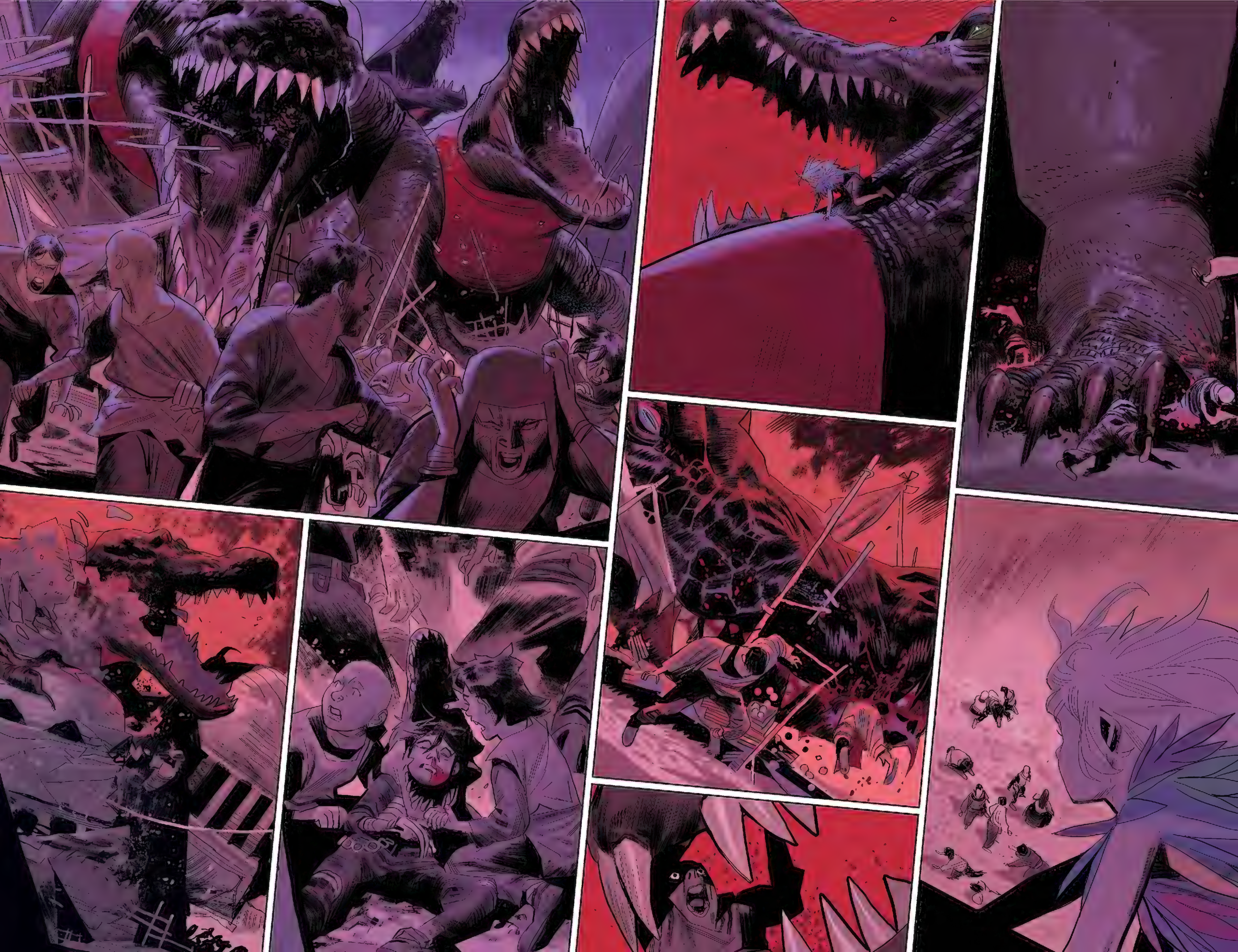
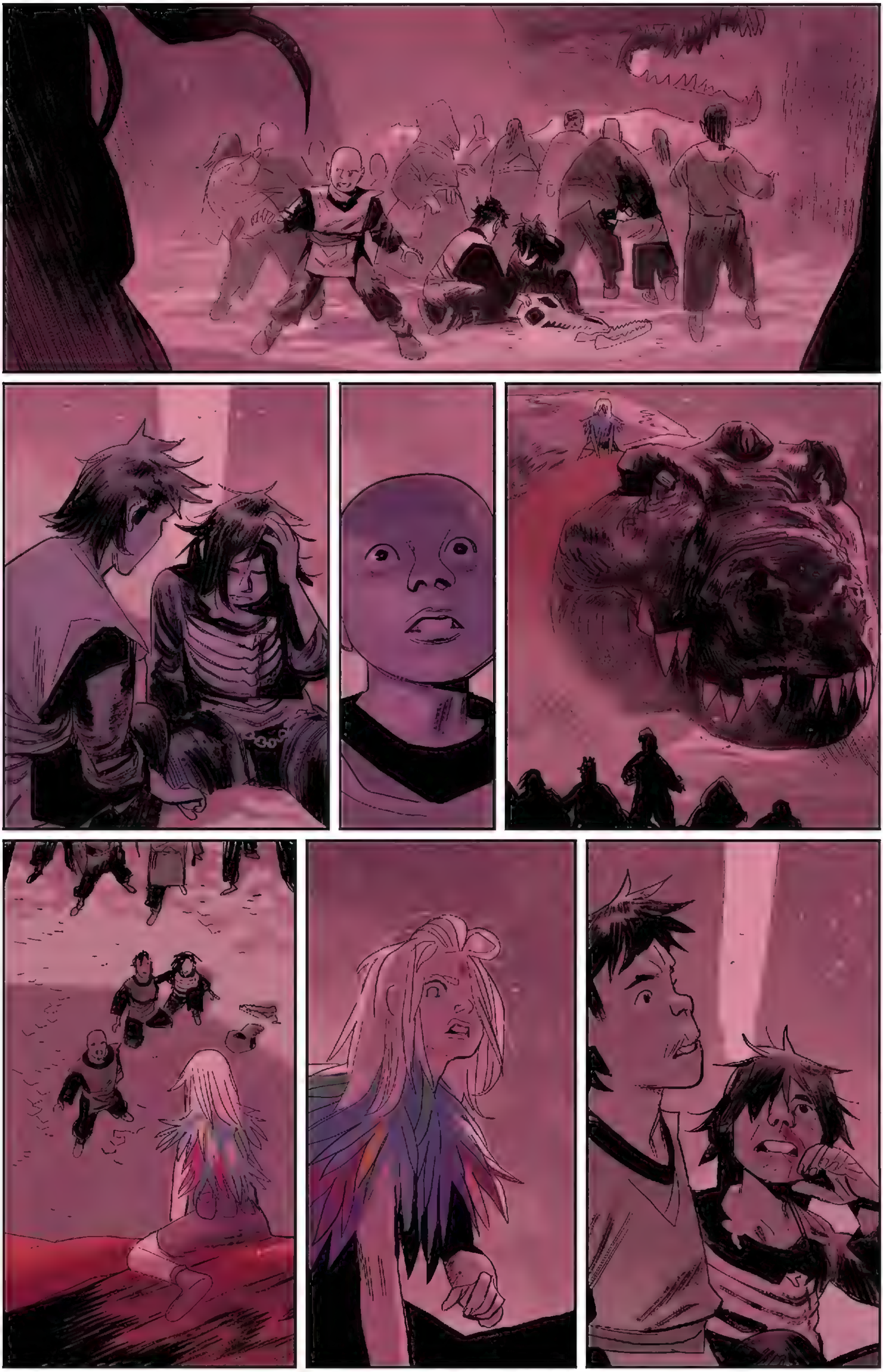
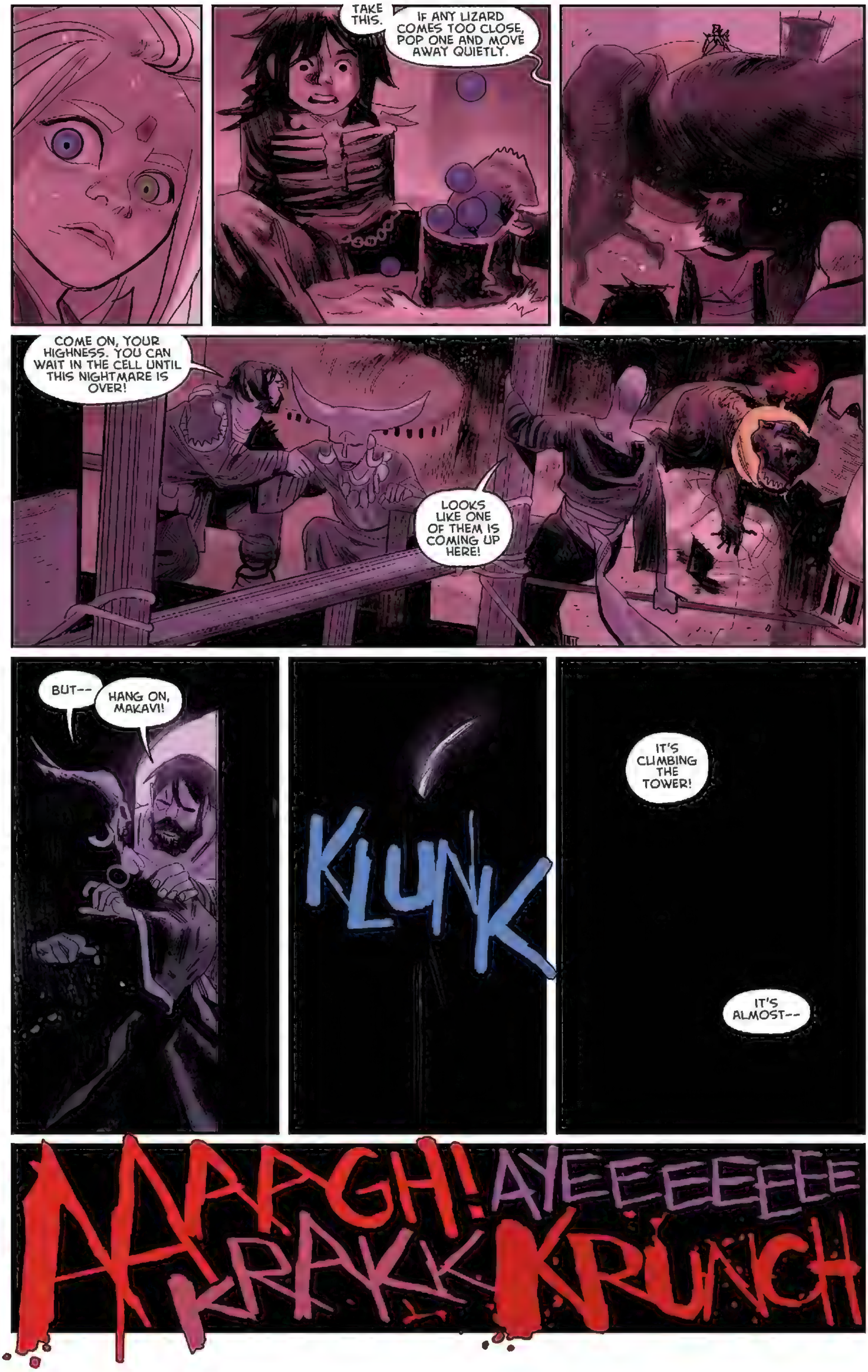
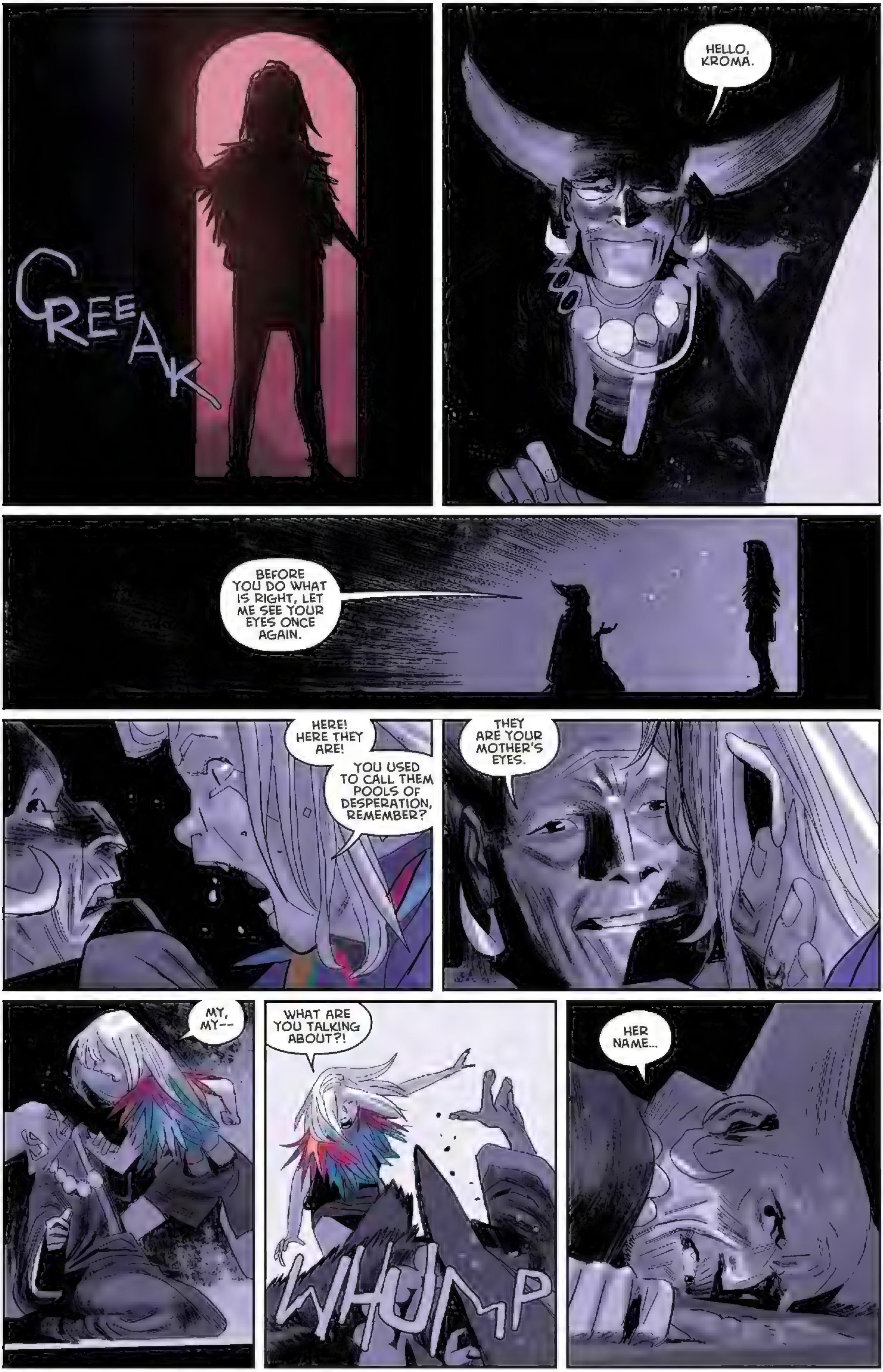
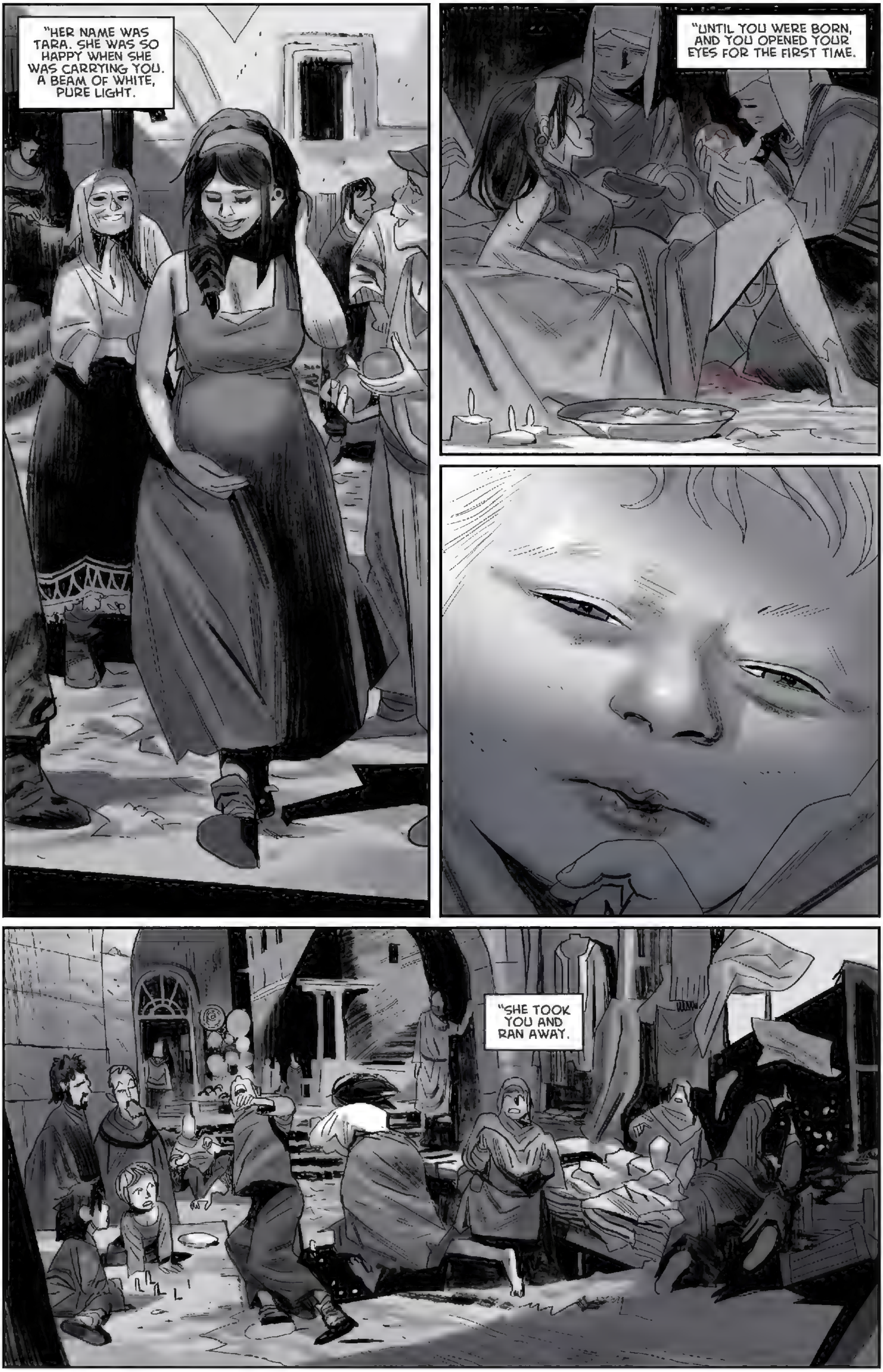

HSSSSSSSS

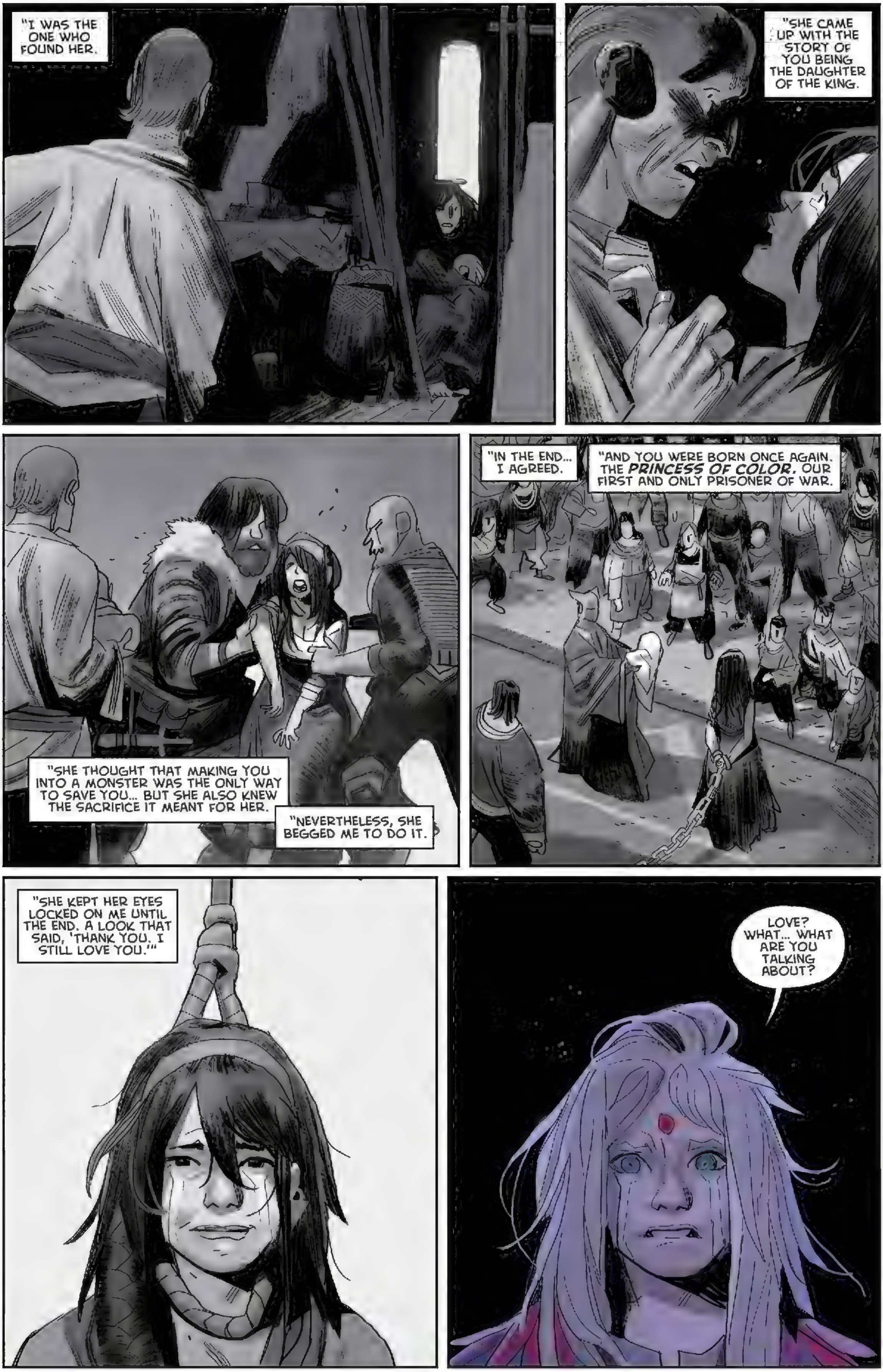


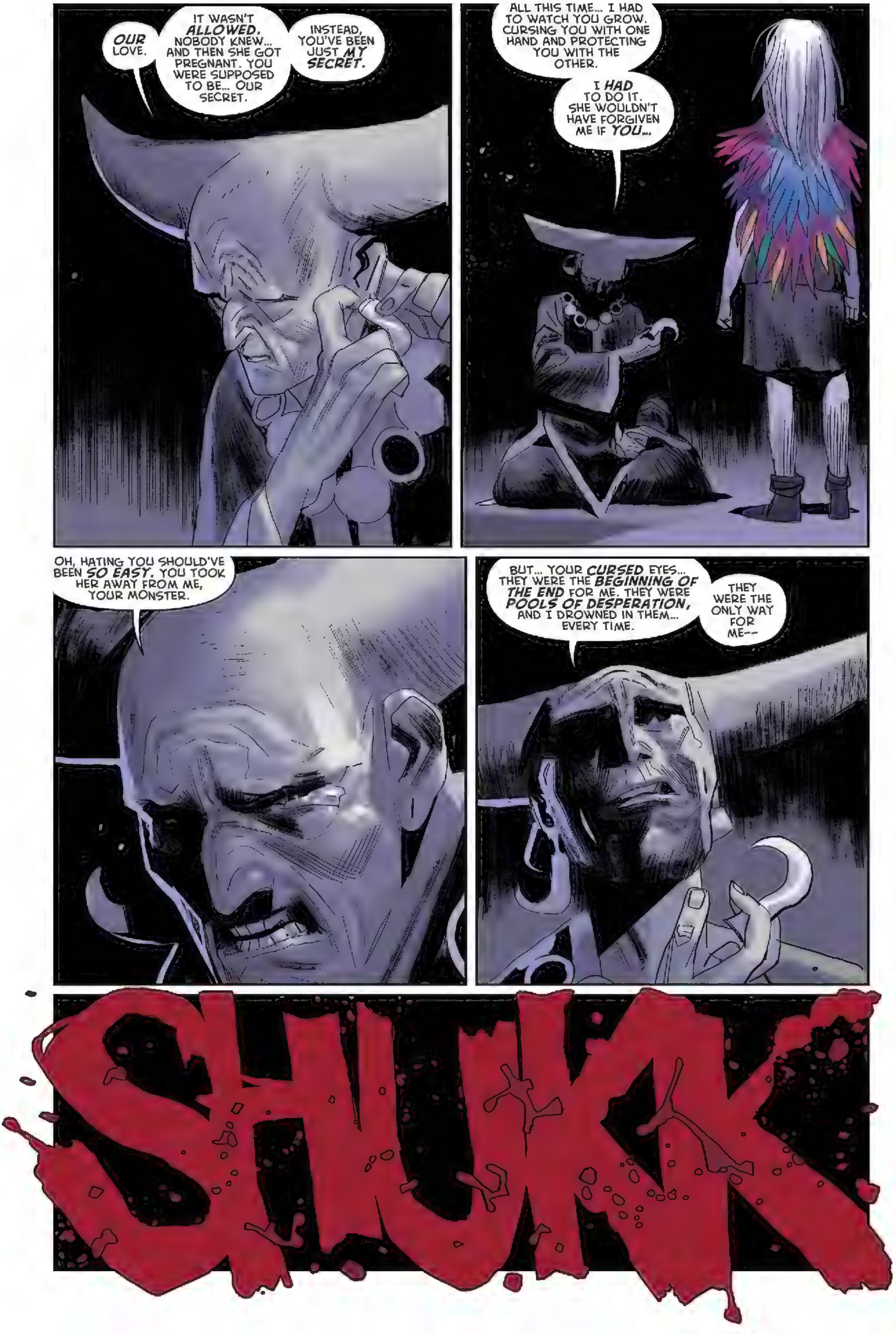


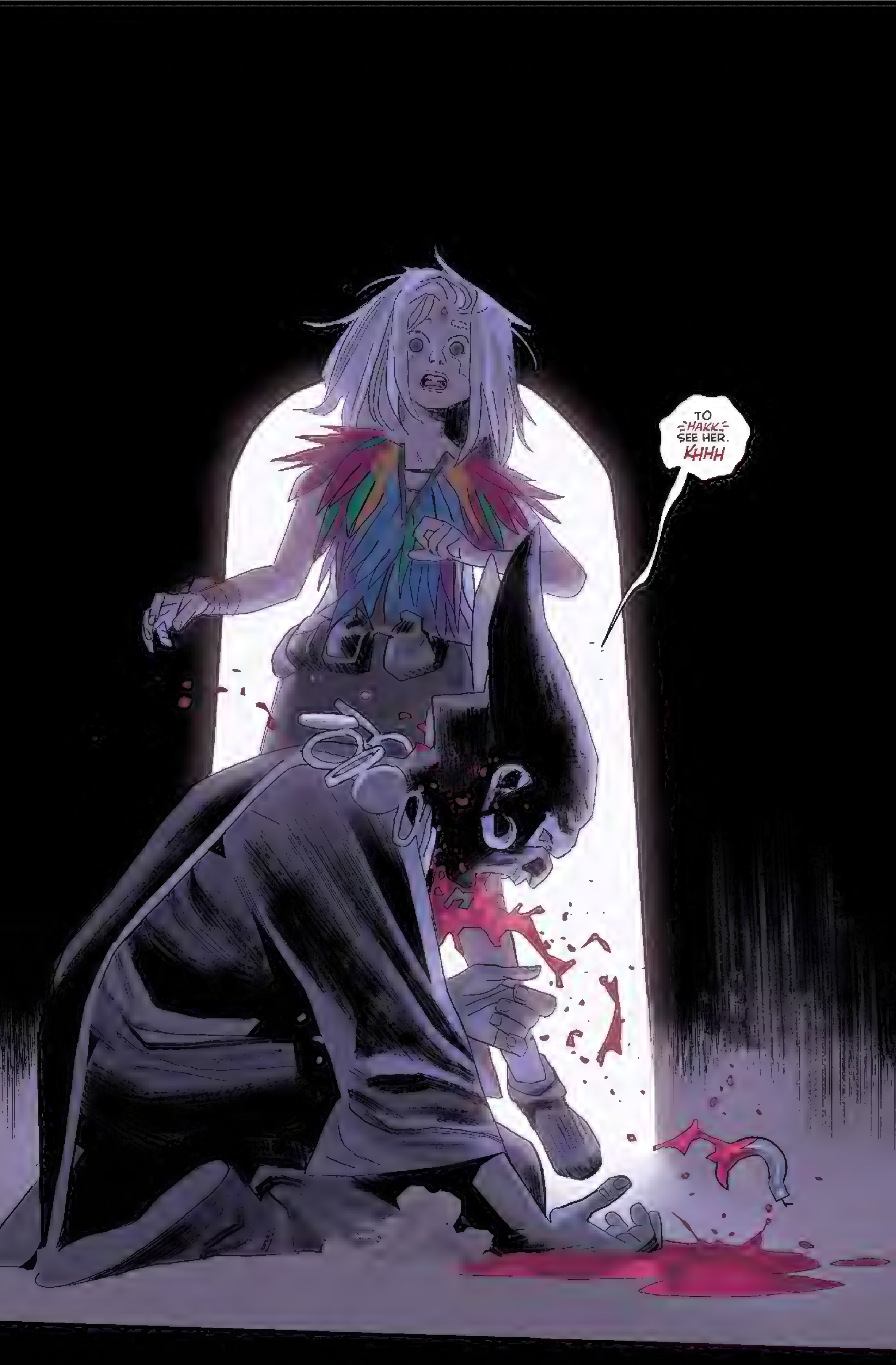

TAKE THIS.
IF ANY LIZARD COMES TOO CLOSE, POP ONE AND MOVE AWAY QUIETLY.
COME ON, YOUR HIGHNESS. YOU CAN WAIT IN THE CELL UNTIL THIS NIGHTMARE IS OVER!
LOOKS LIKE ONE OF THEM IS COMING UP HERE!
BUT--
HANG ON, MAKAVI!
KLUNK
IT'S CLIMBING THE TOWER!
IT'S ALMOST--
AAARGH!
AYEEEEEEEE
KRAKK
KRUNCH

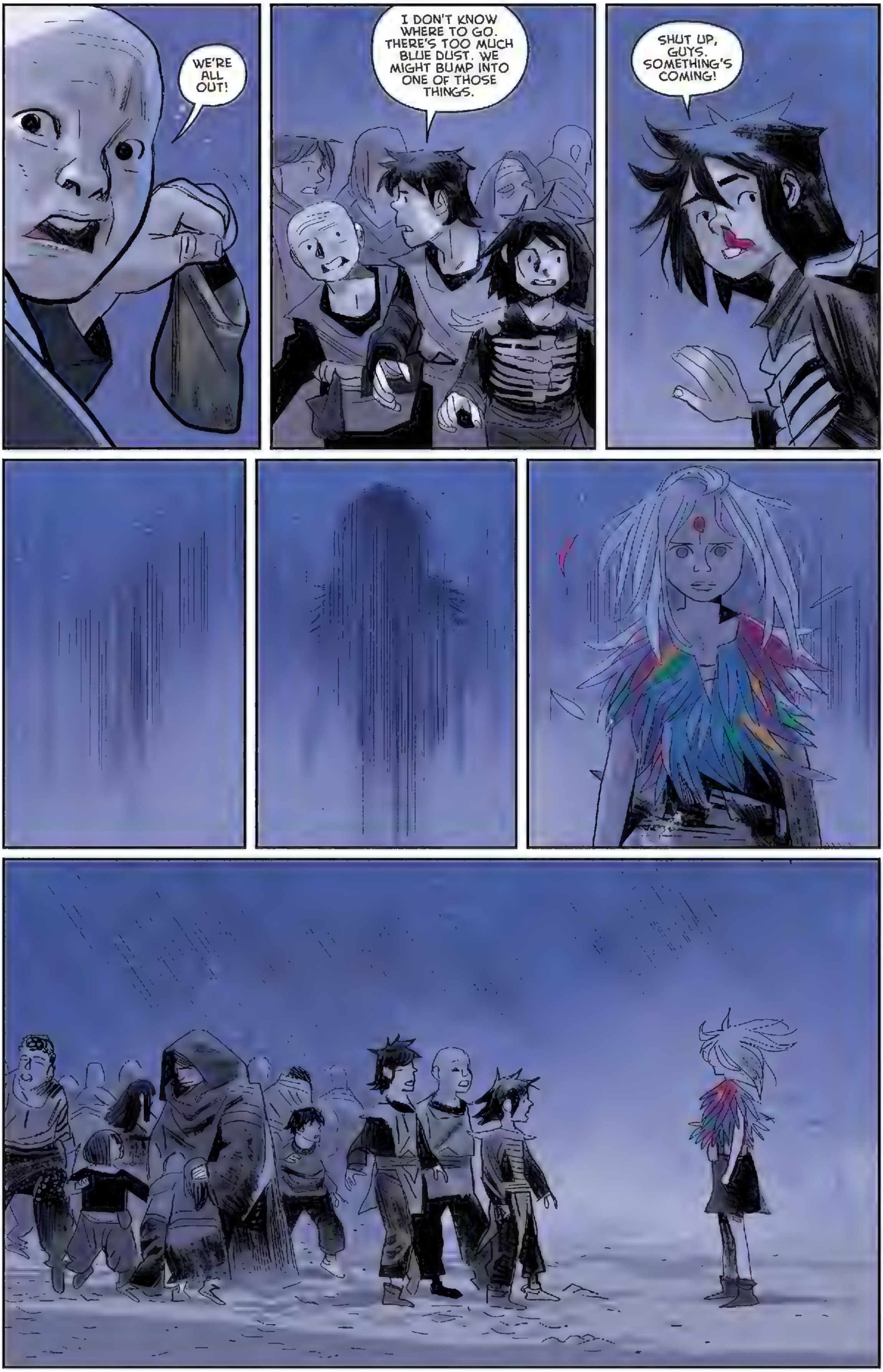

CREEAK
HELLO, KROMA.
BEFORE YOU DO WHAT IS RIGHT, LET ME SEE YOUR EYES ONCE AGAIN.
HERE! HERE THEY ARE!
YOU USED TO CALL THEM POOLS OF DESPERATION, REMEMBER?
THEY ARE YOUR MOTHER'S EYES.
MY, MY--
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
WHUMP
HER NAME...

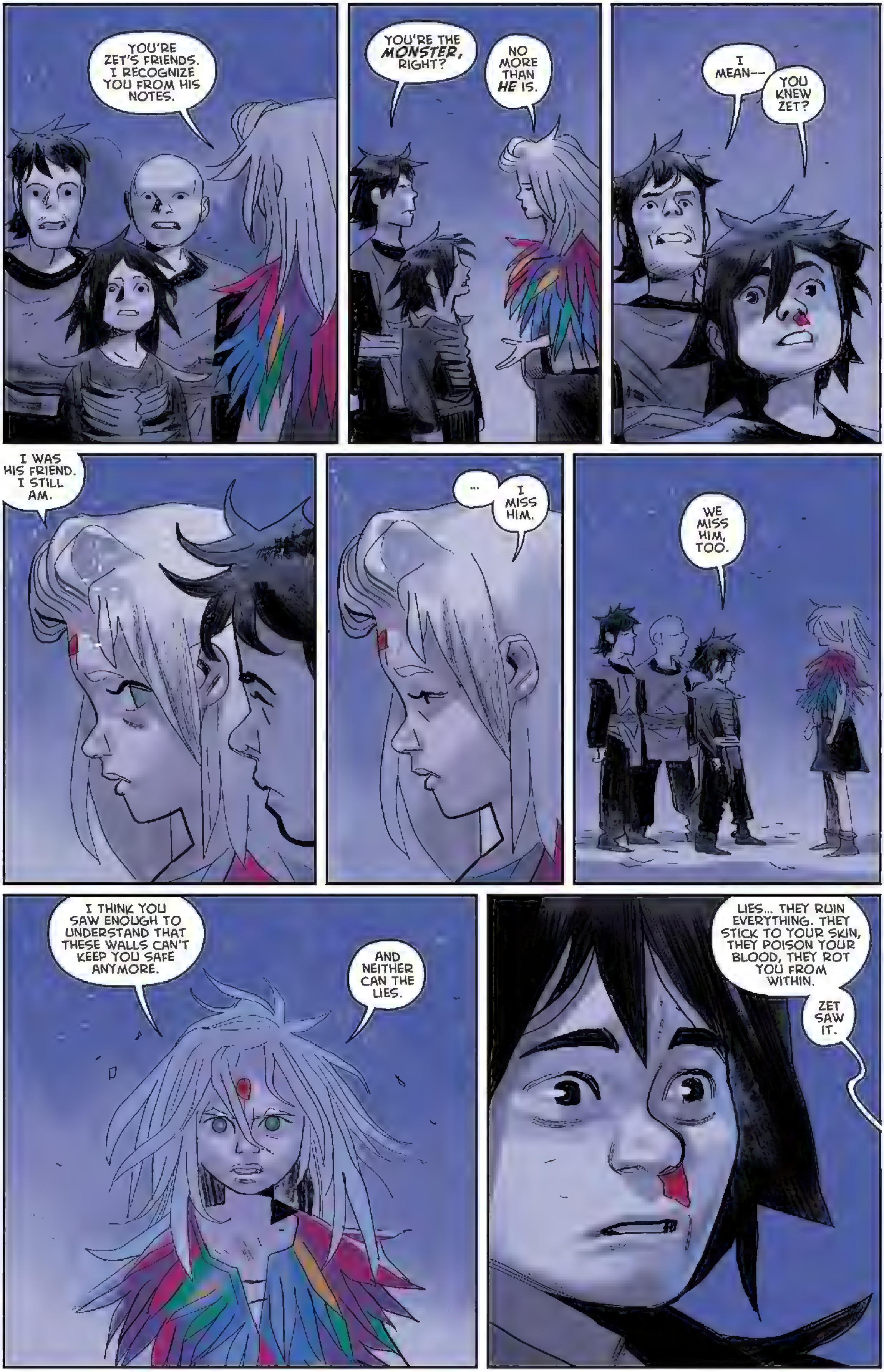

"HER NAME WAS TARA. SHE WAS SO HAPPY WHEN SHE WAS CARRYING YOU. A BEAM OF WHITE, PURE LIGHT.
"UNTIL YOU WERE BORN, AND YOU OPENED YOUR EYES FOR THE FIRST TIME.
"SHE TOOK YOU AND RAN AWAY.

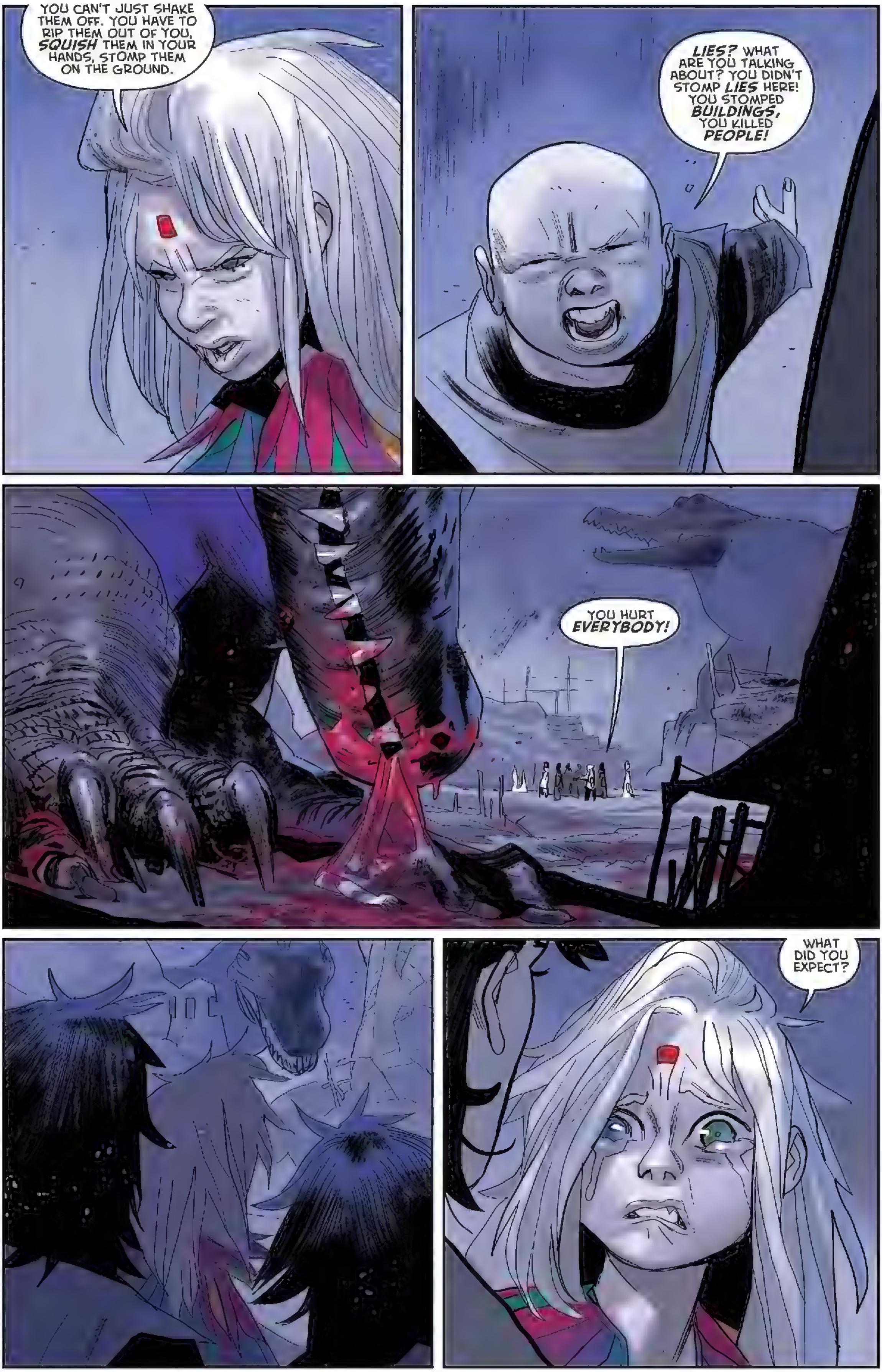

"I WAS THE ONE WHO FOUND HER.
"SHE CAME UP WITH THE STORY OF YOU BEING THE DAUGHTER OF THE KING.
"SHE THOUGHT THAT MAKING YOU INTO A MONSTER WAS THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE YOU... BUT SHE ALSO KNEW THE SACRIFICE IT MEANT FOR HER.
"NEVERTHELESS, SHE BEGGED ME TO DO IT.
"IN THE END... I AGREED.
"AND YOU WERE BORN ONCE AGAIN. THE *PRINCESS OF COLOR.* OUR FIRST AND ONLY PRISONER OF WAR.
"SHE KEPT HER EYES LOCKED ON ME UNTIL THE END. A LOOK THAT SAID, 'THANK YOU. I STILL LOVE YOU.'"
LOVE? WHAT... WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

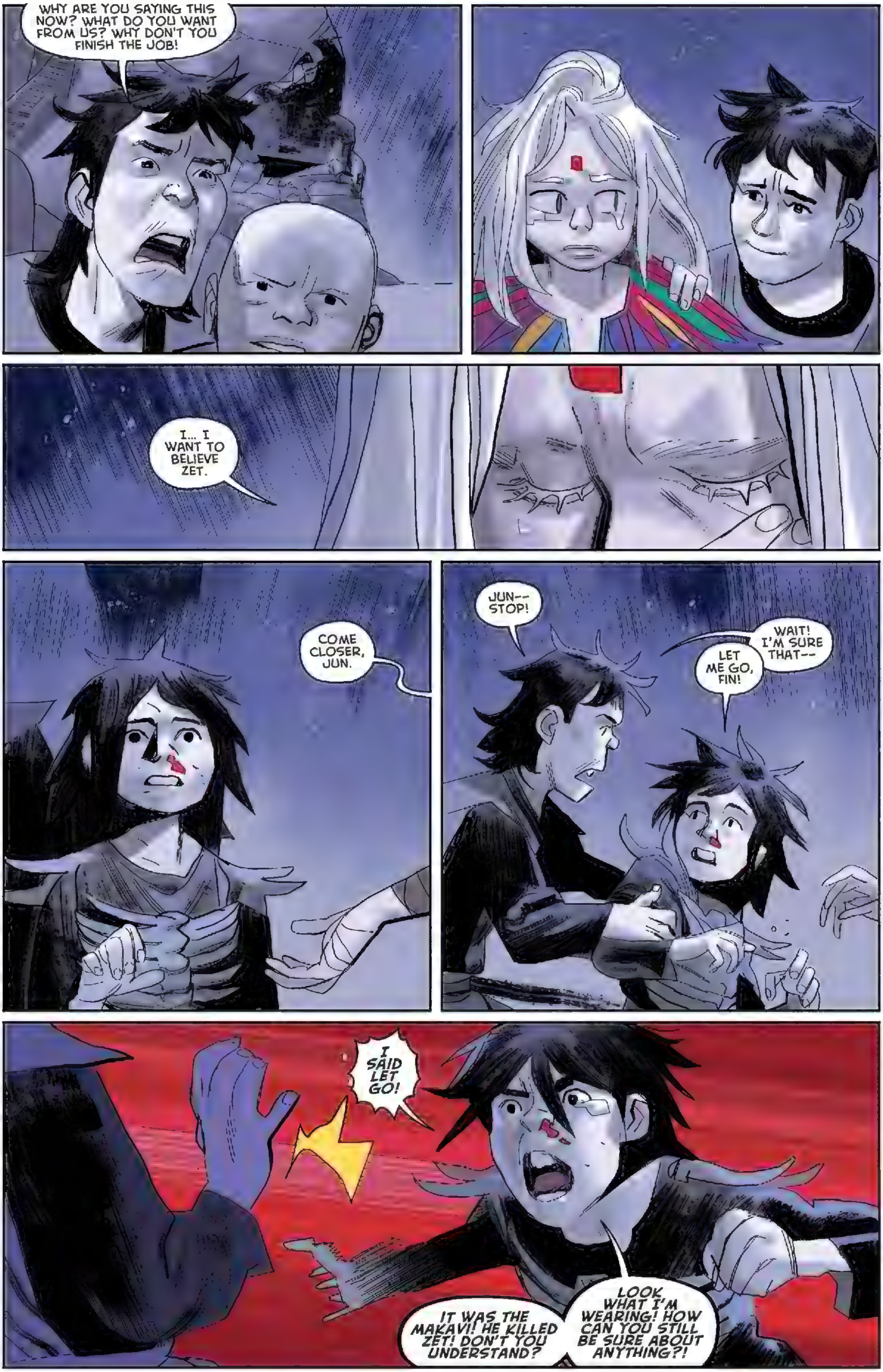

OUR LOVE.
IT WASN'T ALLOWED. NOBODY KNEW... AND THEN SHE GOT PREGNANT. YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE... OUR SECRET.
INSTEAD, YOU'VE BEEN JUST MY SECRET.
ALL THIS TIME... I HAD TO WATCH YOU GROW. CURSING YOU WITH ONE HAND AND PROTECTING YOU WITH THE OTHER.
I HAD TO DO IT. SHE WOULDN'T HAVE FORGIVEN ME IF YOU...
OH, HATING YOU SHOULD'VE BEEN SO EASY. YOU TOOK HER AWAY FROM ME, YOUR MONSTER.
BUT... YOUR CURSED EYES... THEY WERE THE BEGINNING OF THE END FOR ME. THEY WERE POOLS OF DESPERATION, AND I DROWNED IN THEM... EVERY TIME.
THEY WERE THE ONLY WAY FOR ME--
SHUKK

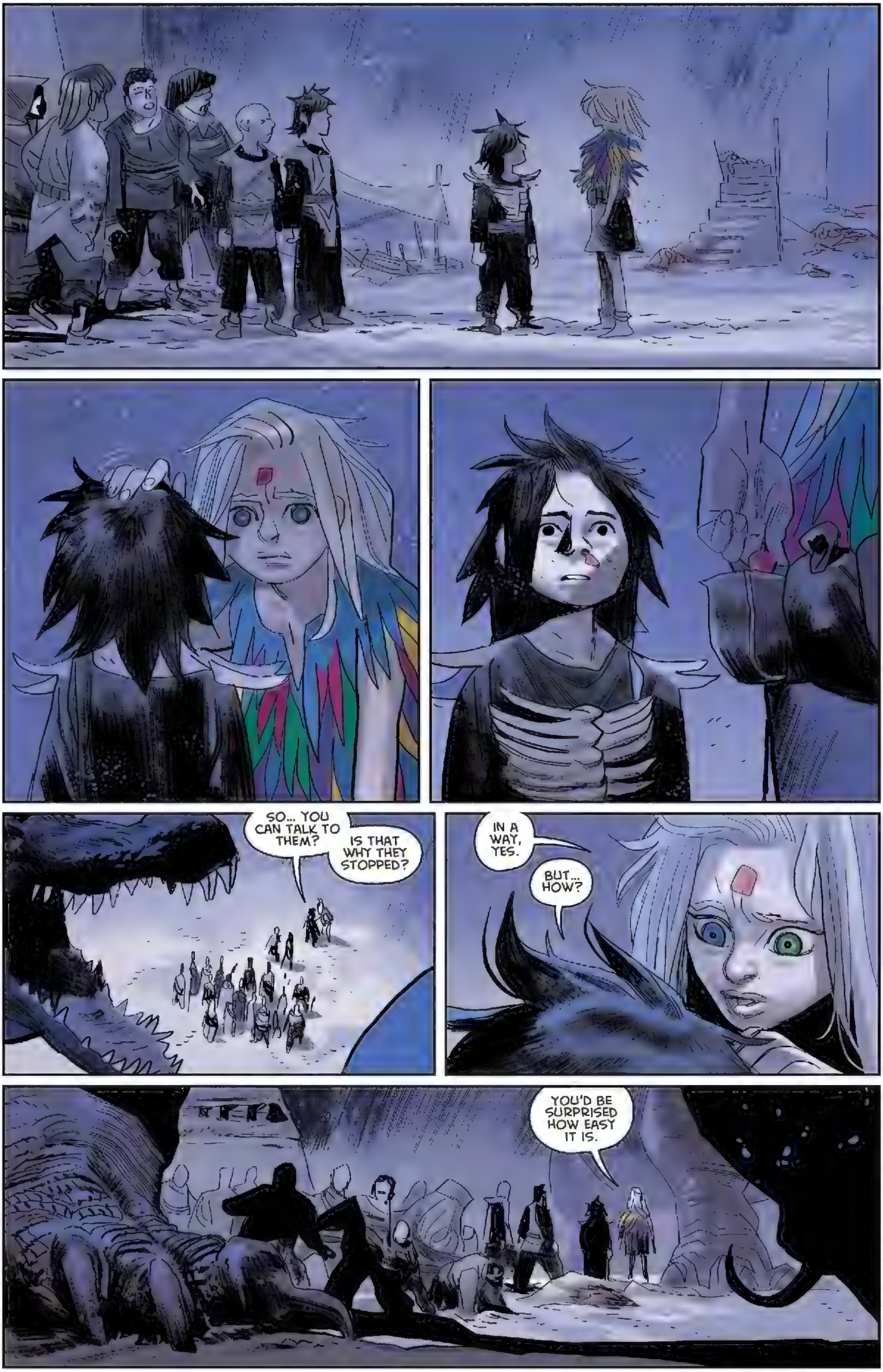

TO ~HAKK~ SEE HER. KHHH

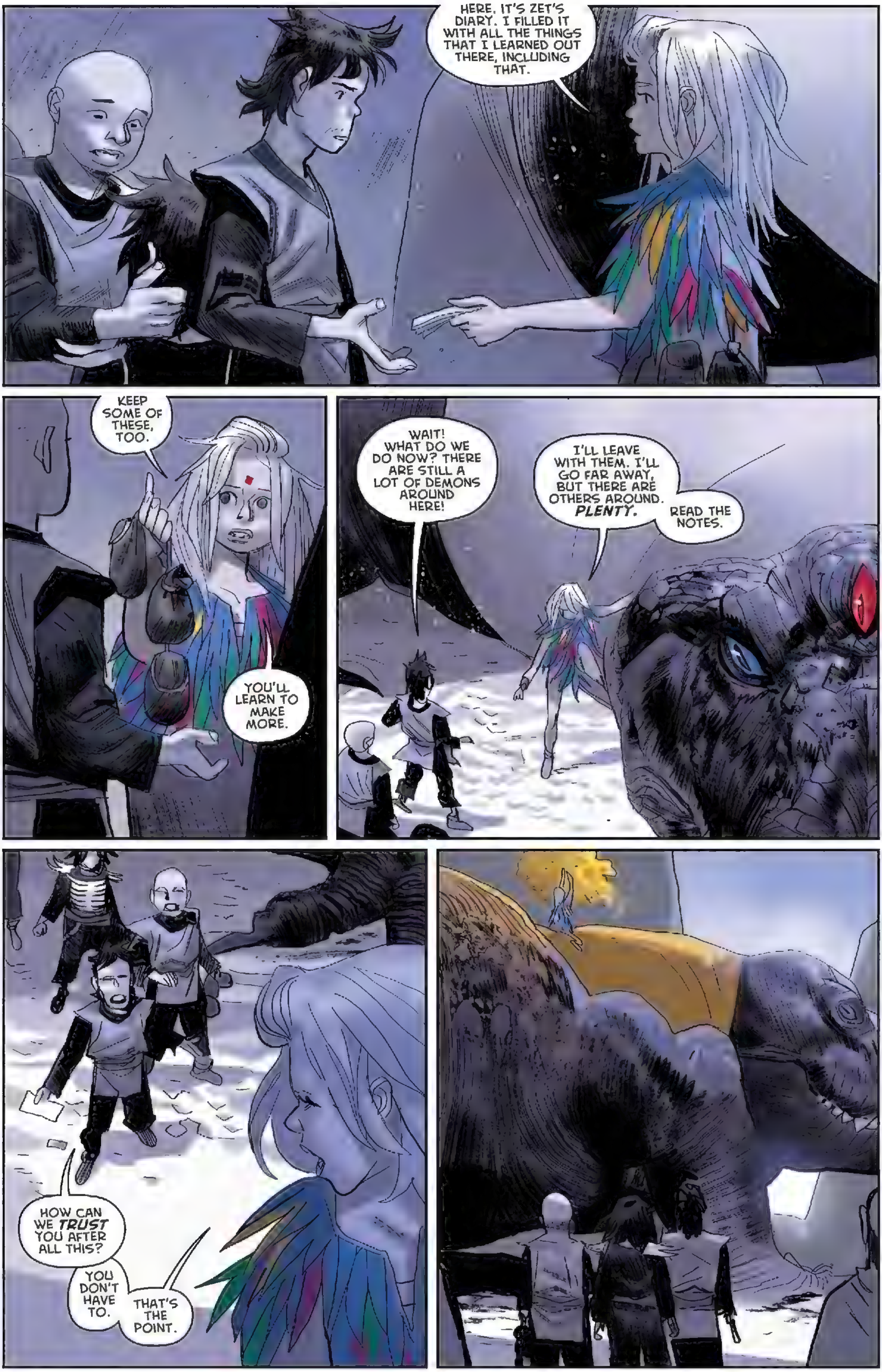

WE'RE ALL OUT!
I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GO. THERE'S TOO MUCH BLUE DUST. WE MIGHT BUMP INTO ONE OF THOSE THINGS.
SHUT UP, GUYS. SOMETHING'S COMING!

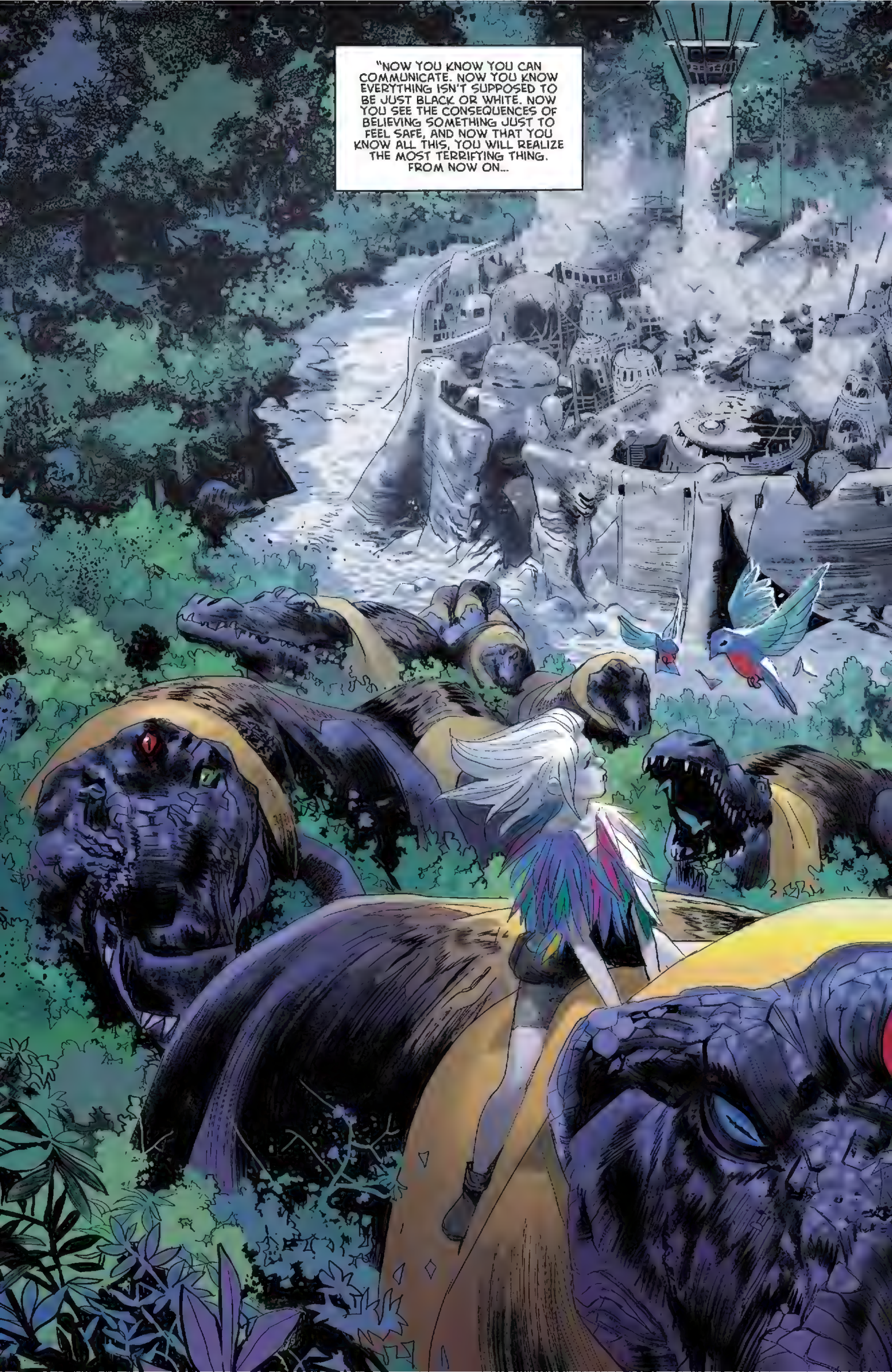

YOU'RE ZET'S FRIENDS. I RECOGNIZE YOU FROM HIS NOTES.
YOU'RE THE *MONSTER*, RIGHT?
NO MORE THAN *HE* IS.
I MEAN--
YOU KNEW ZET?
I WAS HIS FRIEND. I STILL AM.
...
I MISS HIM.
WE MISS HIM, TOO.
I THINK YOU SAW ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND THAT THESE WALLS CAN'T KEEP YOU SAFE ANYMORE.
AND NEITHER CAN THE LIES.
LIES... THEY RUIN EVERYTHING. THEY STICK TO YOUR SKIN, THEY POISON YOUR BLOOD, THEY ROT YOU FROM WITHIN.
ZET SAW IT.

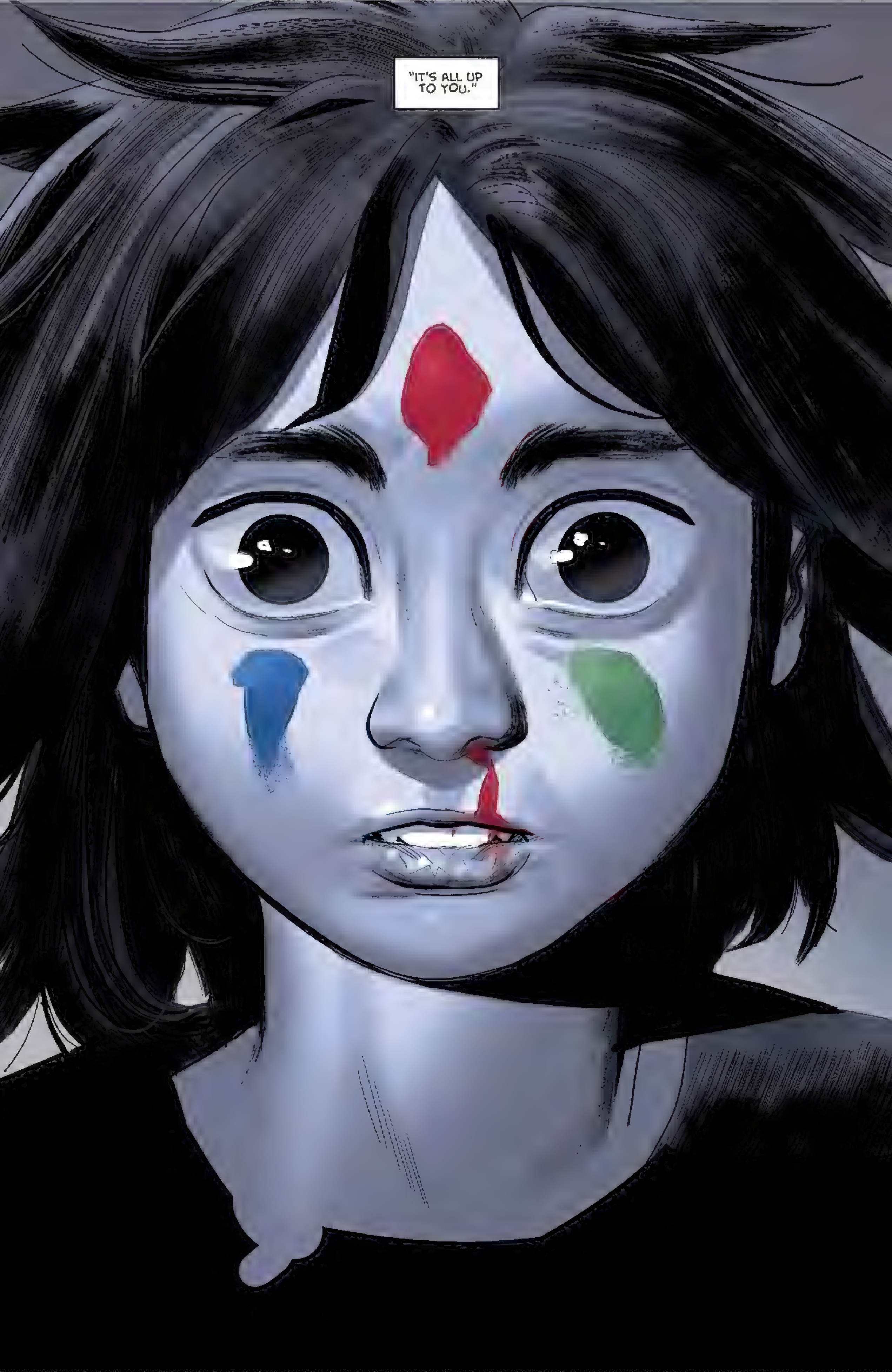

YOU CAN'T JUST SHAKE THEM OFF. YOU HAVE TO RIP THEM OUT OF YOU, *SQUISH* THEM IN YOUR HANDS, STOMP THEM ON THE GROUND.
LIES? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? YOU DIDN'T STOMP *LIES* HERE! YOU STOMPED *BUILDINGS,* YOU KILLED *PEOPLE!*
YOU HURT *EVERYBODY!*
WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?


WHY ARE YOU SAYING THIS NOW? WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM US? WHY DON'T YOU FINISH THE JOB!
I... I WANT TO BELIEVE ZET.
COME CLOSER, JUN.
JUN-- STOP!
WAIT! I'M SURE THAT--
LET ME GO, FIN!
I SAID LET GO!
IT WAS THE MAKAVI! HE KILLED ZET! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?
LOOK WHAT I'M WEARING! HOW CAN YOU STILL BE SURE ABOUT ANYTHING?!


SO... YOU CAN TALK TO THEM?
IS THAT WHY THEY STOPPED?
IN A WAY, YES.
BUT... HOW?
YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW EASY IT IS.

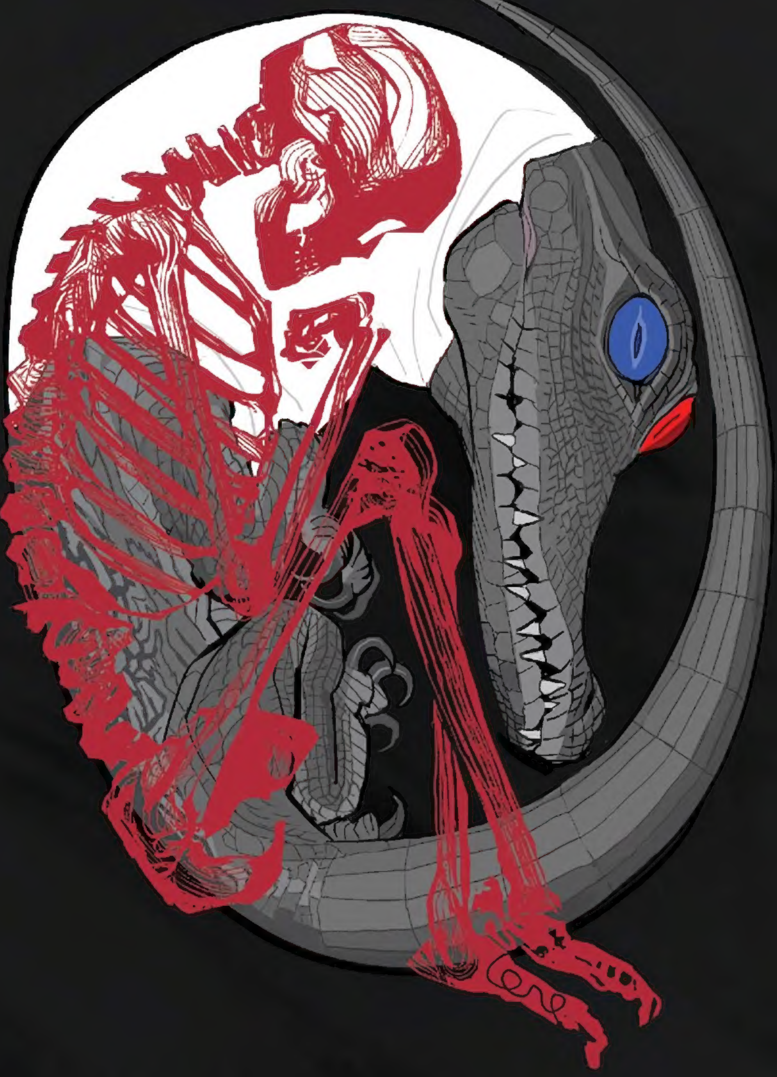

HERE. IT'S ZET'S DIARY. I FILLED IT WITH ALL THE THINGS THAT I LEARNED OUT THERE, INCLUDING THAT.
KEEP SOME OF THESE, TOO.
YOU'LL LEARN TO MAKE MORE.
WAIT! WHAT DO WE DO NOW? THERE ARE STILL A LOT OF DEMONS AROUND HERE!
I'LL LEAVE WITH THEM. I'LL GO FAR AWAY, BUT THERE ARE OTHERS AROUND. ***PLENTY.***
READ THE NOTES.
HOW CAN WE ***TRUST*** YOU AFTER ALL THIS?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO.
THAT'S THE POINT.


"NOW YOU KNOW YOU CAN COMMUNICATE. NOW YOU KNOW EVERYTHING ISN'T SUPPOSED TO BE JUST BLACK OR WHITE. NOW YOU SEE THE CONSEQUENCES OF BELIEVING SOMETHING JUST TO FEEL SAFE, AND NOW THAT YOU KNOW ALL THIS, YOU WILL REALIZE THE MOST TERRIFYING THING. FROM NOW ON...


"IT'S ALL UP TO YOU."

To my father.

> “Everyone should be lining up to watch Lorenzo De Felici stretch his wings and FLY.”
>
> **- ROBERT KIRKMAN** (THE WALKING DEAD, INVINCIBLE)



Writer-artist **LORENZO DE FELICI** (OBLIVION SONG) creates a breathtaking adventure like none other, filled with strange creatures and unparalleled beauty, for fans of ULTRAMEGA and *The Many Deaths of Laila Starr*.

Imprisoned in a tower within the walls of the Pale City, Kroma lives her days out in darkness, believing she is the most evil thing on Earth. However, where her people see a monster, the mysterious orphan Zet sees a human.

But if either of them are to survive the city’s strange rituals and customs, they will have to overcome the cruel fate of Kroma....even if life beyond the walls means risking certain death from giant lizards and enormous birds of prey.

Collects KROMA BY LORENZO DE FELICI #1-4.

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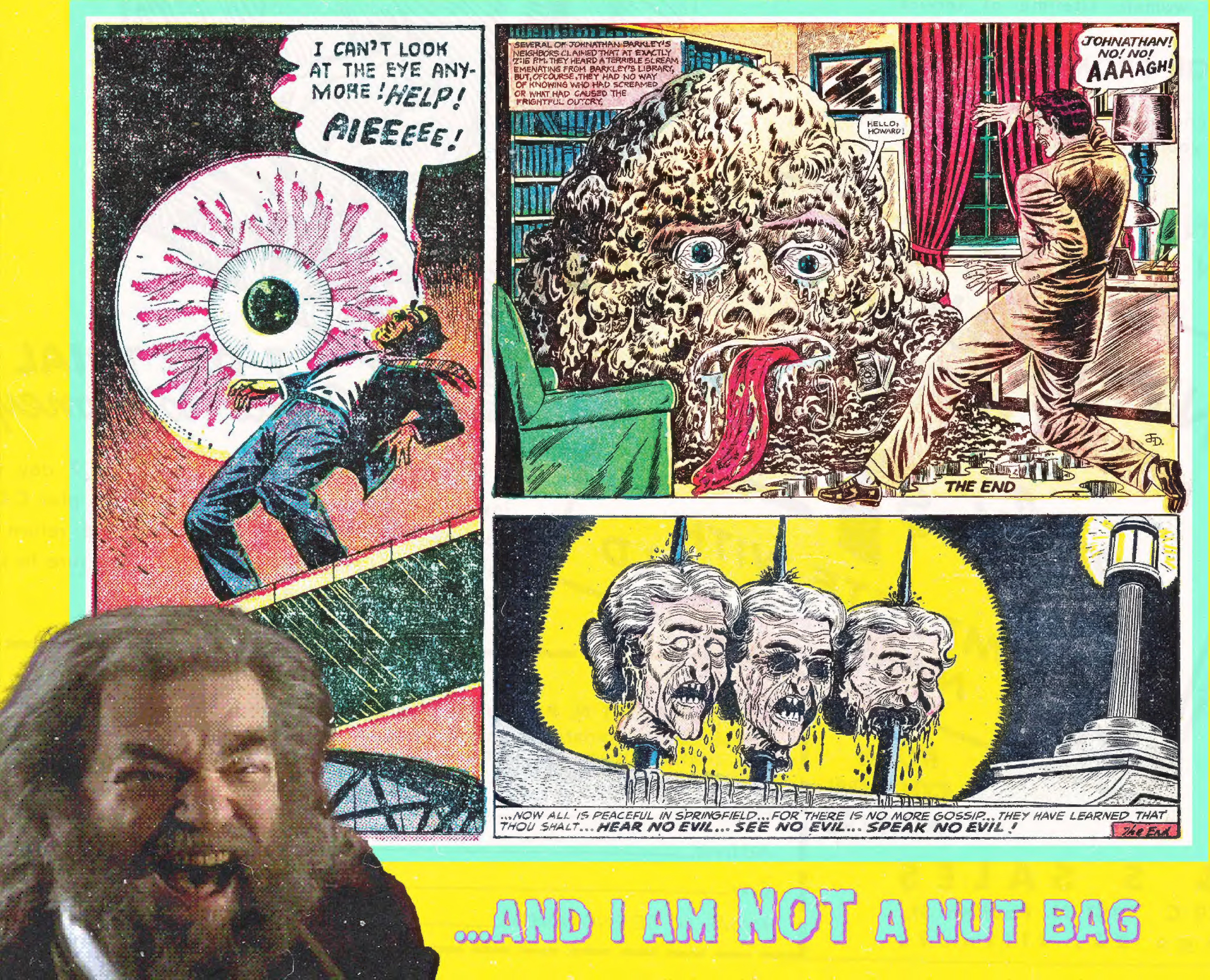
I CAN'T LOOK AT THE EYE ANY-MORE! HELP! AIEEEEEE!
SEVERAL OF JOHNATHAN BARKLEY'S NEIGHBORS CLAIMED THAT AT EXACTLY 2:16 P.M. THEY HEARD A TERRIBLE SCREAM EMANATING FROM BARKLEY'S LIBRARY. BUT, OF COURSE, THEY HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING WHO HAD SCREAMED OR WHAT HAD CAUSED THE FRIGHTFUL OUTCRY.
HELLO, HOWARD!
JOHNATHAN! NO! NO! AAAAGH!
THE END
...NOW ALL IS PEACEFUL IN SPRINGFIELD... FOR THERE IS NO MORE GOSSIP... THEY HAVE LEARNED THAT THOU SHALT... HEAR NO EVIL... SEE NO EVIL... SPEAK NO EVIL!
The End

...AND I AM **NOT** A NUT BAG

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IF YOU LIKE ME

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